Queensland Youth Housing Coalition Inc

Submission to SAAP IV Evaluation

Young people have a right to be protected and supported to meet the challenges and opportunities that life provides.

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I: Introduction to the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition

Queensland Youth Housing Coalition Incorporated (QYHC) is a coalition of organisations and individuals advocating for, and improving young people's housing options and related issues.

QYHC has been operational since 1984 and has contributed at both a policy and service delivery level to the provision of services for homeless young people, young people at risk of homelessness and Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services.

QYHC assists in the development, extension, resourcing and supporting of young people's housing options and youth accommodation and support services.

QYHC advocates for a diverse range and supply of secure, affordable and appropriate housing choices accessible for all young people in particular young people on low incomes.

SAAP is the key program response under which assistance is available to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and to women and children escaping domestic violence, through a range of supported accommodation services.

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition welcomes the opportunity to input into the SAAP IV evaluation. The content of the submission was provided by the members of the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition and draws upon their considerable collective knowledge both in terms of practice and policy. Queensland is also fortunate to have many committed workers who have remained in the field and their historical knowledge of the program is invaluable.

II: Executive Summary and Recommendations

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition submission to the SAAP IV evaluation is based on what is happening on the ground for young people, research exploring the needs of young people, and information provided to us from SAAP services. Information from services comes from a variety of sources ranging from young people's stories to formal data collection.

It is evident from an array of sources that the housing and support services for young people are in an alarming decline. The Child Protection Act 1999 outlines the legislative responsibility of the State yet young people under the age of 18 (or 16 if we utilise the SAAP 'leaving school' criteria) do not have their protective needs met by the State. SAAP services are unable to meet the rising demand for services and there has not been a real increase in funding for this program area. The SAAP system is also finding that they are finding it increasingly difficult to exit young people into independent housing due to the shortages in the public, private and community housing systems. Research has shown that there has been an 8% loss of housing at the lower end of the private rental market nationally. Public housing through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement has also been receiving declining funds and community housing has also stagnated. In recent years there has been a focus on private/public partnerships however this response in reality only meets the gap created by the decline in the bottom end of the private rental market. Further the need for a level of 'return' and viability creates a situation where young people on low incomes in particular single income support payments are unable to 'contribute' and therefore do have limited access to these models of housing. For young people who require a level of support to live independently (with housing not being contingent on support) there is a decreasing number of outreach support services from areas such as health and disability services. Affordability and supply are the not the only barriers to housing for young people. Discrimination especially against certain groups of young people and location of housing are other factors that make access to housing difficult.

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program is one area where the focus on young people has remained. Queensland Youth Housing Coalition would urge the continuation of the program as joint Commonwealth-State Program focussing on the needs of homeless young people. In reflecting on the overseas responses to this target group the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program certainly stands out.

Queensland Youth Housing Coalition does want to strongly point out that young people predominantly leave home due to family conflict and remain homeless due structural impediments that keep them homeless ie lack of adequate income support, lack of access to independent housing etc. Young people who are unable to live at home are more vulnerable to living in poverty or becoming homeless.

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program provides a valuable safety net for young people. The high level of commitment by the workers in the field ensures that improvement strategies and better responses to the needs of young people are continually being developed and refined.

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program has also been instrumental in advocating for better programmatic responses eg JPET and Reconnect.

Process for the SAAP IV evaluation

The short process for consultation with the sector and the limited input into the six modules areas (assumed areas of interest being only in two of the six modules) was an insult to the professionalism and expertise in the youth sector. It was unrealistic to expect underfunded services to "drop" their work with young people so that they could participate in the evaluation with only a couple of days notice.

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition was able to obtain approximately 40% active participation by services in the development of this submission and these services included:

> *Bayside Adolescent Boarding Inc, Beenleigh Youth Service, Brisbane Youth Service, St Margarets Girls, Carina Youth Agency, Anglicare Beenleigh Youth Accommodation Support, In_Sync Youth Service, Gold Coast Youth Service, Ipswich Community Youth Service, Inala Youth & Family Support Service, Sycamore Youth Service, Kyabra, North West Youth Accommodation Service, Sharehouse, Integrated Family and Youth Service Maroochydore Shelter, IFYS Caboolture Shelter, IFYS Transitional Housing, The Lodge Youth Support Service, Toowoomba Youth Service, Youth & Family Service (Logan City) Inc, Youth Advocacy Centre, YES Windsor, Sandgate House, Youth Housing Project , Young Women's Outreach Support Program, Othila's Young Women's, SWISH, Dundalli House.*

The reason for this response rate was that we attempted to get people informed as quickly as possible on the content and process and we attempted to meet, face to face, with the youth SAAP sector in Queensland.

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition provided two information broadsheets to the youth SAAP sector. The first as soon as the evaluation was announced and the second on the release of the Meta evaluation process. The second step was to organise a forum for youth SAAP services for the provision of information and feedback into the six modules. As there is no formal consultation mechanism for SAAP services in Queensland the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition approached the Department of Families for assistance in getting people from all over the State to the forum. The Department of Families denied this request on the basis that they could not identify the value in getting people together. As a result the forum had participation from services predominately in the south-east corner. The third step was to provide the whole of the youth SAAP sector with the detailed handouts of the six modules. The last step was to provide the sector with the

Queensland Youth Housing Coalition responses to each of the modules based on the information from the field and seeking feedback.

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition also disseminated to the field all the information provided by the consultants.

Recommendations

1. That SAAP continues as a National Program that responds to homelessness with active participation from the Commonwealth and the States.

2. That SAAP is maintained as a tied program.

3. That SAAP retain its focus as an accommodation and support program.

4. SAAP and CAP must remain tied.

5. That the Commonwealth acknowledge the structural barriers that keep people homeless or at risk of homelessness in areas such as income support, barriers to employment, child abuse and the lack of low cost housing.

6. That young people be retained as a key target group within the program.

Accountability framework

7. That SAAP services be regarded as a partner in the development of the bilateral and the Schedule 7.

8. That the current advisory mechanisms be enhanced to enable the views of services and clients to be heard.

9. That "transparency' is added as performance measurement of the strategic themes.

10. That further accountability requirements do not divert resources from direct service delivery.

National Research Program

11. That there is greater involvement by the sector in the National Research Program.

12. That research that is conducted is related to the planning processes of SAAP.

13. That services receive research reports of the projects that have been conducted.

14. That there is a greater emphasis in the National Research Program on longitudinal studies.

15. That there is an increase in SAAP funding to meet unmet demand along a continuum.

16. That any funding that is granted to the program must focus on enhancement and growth of existing infrastructure eg to ensure 2 staff on overnight in crisis shelters.

17. Services must be more consulted on the key reporting areas both in the development and implementation stages.

18. That in Queensland a Ministerial Advisory Body is appointed.

19. That there needs to be a recognition in the funding formula of the greater costs incurred by services in rural and remote areas.

Capacity

20. That there needs to be a higher level of understanding of SAAP in all levels of government

21. That SAAP and CAP remain tied and support is seen as the primary policy driver.

22. That there is a National policy response to:

    - low cost housing

    - income support

    - under 16/child protection

    - early intervention

23. That SAAP services are provided with indexation to meet rising costs.

24. That SAAP is resourced to train, recruit and retain a qualified, experienced and committed workforce.

25. That there is funding provided for professional development opportunities ie practice frameworks can be developed and shared.

National Data Collection and IMP

26. That there is ongoing training and support for SAAP services to ensure clear understanding of the purpose of the SAAP National Data Collection.

27. That the data that is collected is robust and meets the needs of services for planning purposes.

28. That data collection does not get used for evaluation purpose, for impinging on the human rights of young people or present an onerous burden on services.

29. That consent is retained as an 'opt in' system for clients.

III: Profile of Queensland Youth SAAP Services

There are currently sixty -three youth funded SAAP services (some of these may have more than one model of service delivery) in Queensland. Most of these services are based on the eastern seaboard of Queensland with the exception of three service based in Mount Isa. It must be noted that some generalist services located throughout Queensland may provide a level of service delivery to young people and their families. In other regions different program areas or the community itself may provide support to young people experiencing difficulty at home and/or who are homeless.

The models of service delivery that follow have been developed as a draft only on a continuum understanding based on need. There is no 'one size that fits all' model of service delivery and the QYHC supports both large and small organisations. The models of service delivery in Queensland range from 24 hour fully supported crisis accommodation; 24 hour fully supported medium term supported accommodation, externally supported and outreach models. It must also be noted that SAAP services and their operational methods may be vastly different to other States/Territories, however it is considered that the current model of service delivery best meets the needs of young people in a continuum of care.

The bed numbers for the 24 hour fully supported both crisis and medium term are generally up to 6, and the externally supported models range from 2 – 6 units with a range of bed capacities. Due to the variable/inequitable funding levels between similar models of service there are capacity differences across organisations.

It is important to note that under the broad term of young people there are a range of target groups, and access and equity issues associated with each ie young women, young parenting women, indigenous young people and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The models outlined below are draft and based on consultation with the youth sector and they are not the only models that can respond to young people. There may need to be service models that are developed to respond to specific target groups.

There are a range of reasons as to how and why different organisations operate a different model of service. These reasons can be related but not limited to:

- Existing infrastructure in the community eg there may be a need for less crisis housing in an area where there are lots of other social housing options as opposed to a region where there are limited or no social housing options

- Geographical variation

- The need for young people to have a choice in the type of service they wish to access as well as entering a service that most meets their needs means that we need to ensure there is a diversity of models/ accommodation options.

It must also be acknowledged that young people do not utilise SAAP services in a linear manner and for this reasons there needs to be multiple entry points for young people.

Code	Name	Postal address	Suburb	Postcode	Office phone	Fax	Service type
1	Dundalli House	161 Newmarket Road	WILSTON	4102	07 3356 1899	07 3856 0138	Crisis Accommodation – males only
2	Bahloo Womens	PO Box 8181	WOOLLONGABBA	4102	07 3391 2815	07 3391 1786	Crisis Accommodation – females only
3	Bayside Adolescent Boarding Inc	PO Box 69	WYNNUM	4178	07 3393 4170	07 3393 5808	Externally supported
4	Beenleigh Youth Service	PO Box 1147	BEENLEIGH	4207	07 3287 1290	07 3287 1735	Externally supported
5	Brisbane Youth Service	PO Box 1389	FORTITUDE VALLEY	4006	07 3252 3750	07 3252 2166	Externally supported Outreach
6	Bundaberg Youth Service	PO Box 1743	BUNDABERG	4670	07 4153 2227	07 4153 3443	Crisis accommodation
7	Cairns St Johns Boys	PO Box 154	CAIRNS	4870	07 4032 4971	07 4032 4972	Crisis Accommodation
8	Cairns St Margarets Girls	PO Box 692e	EARLVILLE	4870	07 4033 2678	07 4033 5711	Crisis Accommodation
9	Caloundra Youth Focus Inc	PO Box 14	GOLDEN BEACH	4551	07 5492 2498	07 5492 2389	Externally supported – medium term
10	Capricorn Youth Housing	PO Box 141	ROCKHAMPTON	4700	07 4927 7333	07 4922 8488	Crisis Accommodation
11	Darumbal Aboriginal & Tsi Youth Services	2/56 Queen Elizabeth Drive	NORTH ROCKHAMPTON	4701	07 4922 6180	07 4922 8147	Crisis accommodation

12	Carina Youth Agency	PO Box 395	CARINA	4152	07 3395 3044	07 3398 4443	Externally supported
							Mediumterm fully supported
13	Anglicare Beenleigh Youth Accomodation Support	PO Box 913	BEENLEIGH	4702	07 3807 5715	07 3382 0535	24 hour crisis accommodation
							Externally supported – medium term
14	In_Sync Youth Service	P.O. Box 659	Cleveland	4163	07 38213499	07 38216944	Externally supported – males only
15	Girls' Time Out	PO Box 1350	ROCKHAMPTON	4700	07 4922 7236	07 4922 9008	Drop in
16	Roseberry Youth Services Inc	PO Box 1439	GLADSTONE	4680	07 4972 5383	07 4972 5383	Crisis Accommodation
							Externally supported
17	GC Project For Homeless Youth			4215	07 5591 3746	07 5591 1218	Crisis Accommodation
							24 hour medium term
18	Gold Coast Youth Service Inc	PO Box 740	BURLEIGH HEADS	4220	07 5572 0400	07 5575 2607	Externally supported
							Outreach
19	Goodna Youth Accommodation Service Inc	PO Box 227	GOODNA	4300	07 3818 1050	07 3818 0856	Externally supported
20	Gympie Widgee Youth Service Inc	PO Box 310	GYMPIE	4570	07 5482 6188	07 5482 6098	Externally supported

21	Hannahs House Ipswich	1 Pettigrew Street	WOODEND	4305	07 3812 1395	07 3812 1395	Crisis Accommodation females only
22	Ipswich Community Youth Service	1C Griffiths Road	EASTERN HEIGHTS	4305	07 3812 1050	07 3812 2971	Externally supported
23	Inala Youth & Family Support Service	PO Box 141	INALA	4077	07 3372 2655	07 3372 2710	Externally supported
24	Sycamore Youth Service	PO Box 320	INALA	4077	07 3372 4435	07 3278 7703	Externally supported
25	Innisfail Youth and Family Care Inc	PO Box 175	INNISFAIL	4860	07 4061 2778	07 4061 2675	Crisis accommodation
26	Iona Crisis Accommodation For Young Women -Uniting Church				07 4723 2388	07 4773 6029	
27	Ipswich Youth Service	PO Box 848	IPSWICH	4305	07 3812 1199	07 3812 3049	Crisis Accommodation
28	Kyabra		SUNNYBANK				Externally supported
29	Kalyan Youth Service	PO Box 625	MACKAY	4740	07 4951 4352	07 4957 6807	Crisis Accommodation
30	Mount Isa Youth Shelter Inc	PO Box 2151	MOUNT ISA	4825	07 4743 8450	07 4749 0840	Crisis Accommodation
31	Mt Isa Aicca Youth Homeless Program	PO Box 1324	MOUNT ISA	4825	07 4749 0918	07 4743 3123	Crisis Accommodation
32	Ngurri Ngurri Shelter	PO Box 2234	MOUNT ISA	4825	07 4743 7088	07 4743 7099	Crisis Accommodation
33	Noosa Youth Service	PO Box 365	TEWANTIN	4565	07 5442 4277	07 5442 4846	Externally supported
34	North West Youth Accommodation Service	PO Box 502	ALDERLEY	4051	07 3855 5233	07 3855 5266	Externally supported

35	Nth Qld Aboriginal and Torres Strait Isl Corp For Child Care	119 Eleventh Avenue	TOWNSVILLE	4810	07 4721 5559	07 4721 3179	Crisis Accommodation
36	Orana Supported Youth Accommodation	PO Box 5320	BRENDALE	4500	07 3261 3969	07 3261 3969	Crisis Accommodation
37	Rockhampton New Horizons	PO Box 908	ROCKHAMPTON	4701	07 4922 3603	07 4921 3603	
38	Sharehouse	PO Box 5975	TOWNSVILLE	4810	07 4771 5346	07 4721 6511	Crisis Accommodation
39	Nathanael House	PO Box 421	MOUNT GRAVATT	4122	07 3849 4038	07 3349 1774	Crisis Accommodation
40	Integrated Family and Youth Service Maroochydore Shelter	PO Box 192 44Burnett Street 135 Duporth Avenue	MOOLOOLABA MAROOCHYDORE	4557 4558	07 5477 9000 07 5479 2499	07 5444 8905 5443 9430	Crisis Accommodation
	IFYS Caboolture Shelter	1 Merewyn Street	BURPENGARY	4505	07 3888 9355	07 3888 9491	Crisis Accommodation
	IFYS Transitional Housing	44 Burnett Street	MOOLOOLABA	4557	07 5477 9000	07 5444 8905	Externally Supported
41	Chameleon	PO Box 785	REDCLIFFE	4020	07 328 44805	07 3284 4088	Crisis accommodation
42	Teen Challenge Youth Accommodation Services	PO Box 308	FORTITUDE VALLEY	4006	07 3252 3118	07 3252 4266	Crisis Accommodation
43	The Haven Association Youth Accommodation	Lot 4 Jordan Court	TOOWOOMBA	4350	07 4630 4181	07 4630 4239	
44	The Lodge Youth Support Service	PO Box 120	NORTHGATE	4013	07 32662155	07 3256 7511	24 hour medium/long term fully supported
45	Toowoomba Youth Service	PO Box 2067	TOOWOOMBA	4350	07 4639 1333	07 4639 2291	24 hour crisis

46	Young Parent Program	PO Box 86b	BUNGALOW	4870	07 4051 9366	07 4031 6750	Outreach/info&referral
47	Young Womens Place Inc	PO Box 1012	TOOWOOMBA	4350	07 4639 4380	07 4638 5360	
48	Youth & Family Service (Logan City) Inc	PO Box 727	WOODRIDGE	4114	07 320 88199	07 3208 8589	Externally supported
50	Youth Advocacy Centre	52 Inwood Street	WOOLOOWIN	4030	07 3857 1155	07 3857 1803	information/referral & outreach
51	YES Windsor	PO Box 15	LUTWYCHE	4030	07 3357 7655	07 3357 3099	Crisis accommodation
	Sandgate House						24 hour medium/long term fully supported
52	Youth Housing Project	PO Box 2037	WINDSOR	4030	07 3857 5999	07 3857 5066	Externally supported
53	Youth Link Housing Program	PO Box 7479	CAIRNS	4870	07 4031 6179	07 4051 9627	Externally supported
54	Youthcare Hervey Bay Inc	PO Box 485	PIALBA	4655	07 4125 5798	07 4125 5308	
55	Youthcare Pine Rivers	PO Box 143	STRATHPINE	4500	07 3881 2823	07 3881 1047	Externally supported
56	Zig Zag	575 Old Cleveland Road	CAMP HILL	4152	07 3843 1823	07 3398 5400	Externally supported
57	Young Women's Outreach Support Program	PO Box 136	CAROLE PARK	4300	07 3372 7270	07 3278 7703	Externally supported
58	South Burnett Area Youth Service	PO Box 808	KINGAROY	4610	07 4162 7788	07 4162 2783	Crisis Accommodation
59	Othila's Young Women's	58 Old Cleveland Road	STONES CORNER	4120	07 3847 9633	07 38479949	Externally supported
60	Interlink	4 Ponderosa Street	BROWNS PLAINS	4118	07 3826 5107	07 3808 0014	Externally supported

61	SWISH						
62	Roy's Retreat						Crisis Accommodation
63	St Mary's						Externally Supported - onsite

Crisis fully supported accommodation

Area	Description
Service Model	24-hour on site support, 24-hour referral/intake, basic life skills needs ie Health, hygiene, material needs, case management approach, day support to implement case plan, variable follow up support.
Target Group and profiles	Homeless and at risk young people: Over 16 years, broad support needs - staff to client ratio 2:6/7 Include under 16's, JJ, high support needs – staff to client ratio 2:5/6
Staffing Structure	8 full-time Youth Workers – CASH Award Level 2 /3 (Level 3 to allow for 2 people per shift, 3 8 hour rotating shifts and 2 plus sleepover, staff meeting hours included). 1 full-time Coordinator – CASH 4,no caseload, focus on service management and development as well as integration and co-ordination of services with other service providers within the service system through participation in local, regional and state networks and processes for improved responsiveness. 1 full–time Administrator CASH 2.
Broad service outcome	Crisis accommodation and support appropriate to client need through the provision of a case management approach to address immediate housing and support needs.
Objectives	To provide support services to address: Immediate needs of safety, shelter, food, etc.; Crisis intervention and support; 24 hour referral/intake;

	Case management approach to needs identification and short term goal setting; Advocacy; Education, training, income issues; Information and referral for appropriate transition to more stable accommodation.
Capacity	5/6 young people on-site in a share accommodation model

Medium/long term fully supported accommodation

Area	Description
Service Model	24 hour on-site support, living skills program and case management, information, referral and advocacy, educational and therapeutic recreational programs, day program for young people who are not engaged in vocational or educational training, follow up support.
Target Group and profiles	Homeless and at-risk young people aged 15-18 years. Young people with limited or no family support who have complex of high support and supervision needs inc (but not limited to) young people under statutory orders, young people who have mental health issues. Ratio of 2 staff to 5/6 young people at all times (worker health and safety)
Staffing Structure	8 full-time youth workers CASH 2/3 1.0 full-time coordinator CASH 4 1.0 full time Administrator CASH 2 1.0 full-time outreach/follow up support worker CASH 2/3
Broad service outcome	Transitional accommodation, assistance as per SAAP aim. To support to enable young people to move towards independent living

Objectives	Enable young people to develop sound practical living skills and resources for independent living; 1. Assist young people to identify goals and work towards them; 2. Address the diverse issues that young present; 3. Assist young people to learn skills in conflict resolution and decision making thus encouraging them to make informed decisions about their lives and to take responsibility for same; 4. Assist young people in their personal and social development; 5. Assist young people to re-establish family links wherever possible and to foster a sense of community belonging.
Capacity	5/6 young people on-site in a share accommodation model and an average of 15 external follow up support clients

Externally supported accommodation and support

AREA	DESCRIPTION
Service Model	Long term externally supported (units or share), living skills program, referral, advocacy and personal support, follow up support.
Target Group	Homeless and at-risk young people aged 16-25 years.
Staffing Structure	1. 2 full-time youth workers 2. 1 full-time coordinator **Ratio of 2 staff to 8 young people at all times.**

	3. 0.5 Administrator (19 hours) 4. 1 full-time outreach/follow up support worker (? Name of this position to include housing information and support)	
Goals	Transitional accommodation, assistance and support to enable young people to move towards independent living.	
Objectives	1. Enable young people to develop sound practical living skills and resources for independent living; 2. Provide information, advocacy and referrals to other services to develop responses to individual client needs; 3. Assist young people to identify goals and work towards them; 4. Assist young people to learn skills in conflict resolution and decision making thus encouraging them to make informed decisions about their lives and to take responsibility for same; 5. Assist young people in their personal and social development; 6. Assistance and follow up in securing and maintaining accommodation when young people exit the program.	
Capacity	8 young people in a externally supported model (flats or share) and an average of 15 external follow up support clients	

Semi-supported accommodation and support

AREA	DESCRIPTION
Service Model	Medium to long term supported (units or share) that have both on-site (caretaker) and external support, living skills program, referral, advocacy and personal support, follow up support. (a model developed out of response to the lack of funding for either a on-site supported or externally supported accommodation option). Conditional on caretaker not being a sole position.

Target Group and profile	Homeless and at-risk young people aged 16-25 years.
Staffing Structure	2.0 full time support workers CASH 2/3 1.0 full time coordinator CASH 4 1.0 full time administrator CASH 2/3 1 follow up support worker CASH 2/3
Broad service outcome	Transitional accommodation, assistance and support to enable young people to move towards independent living.
Objectives	1. Enable young people to develop sound practical living skills and resources for independent living; 2. Provide information, advocacy and referrals to other services to develop responses to individual and/or family client needs; 3. Assist young people to maintain, practice and further enhance their goals; 4. Assist young people to learn skills in conflict resolution and decision making thus encouraging them to make informed decisions about their lives and to take responsibility for same; 5. Assist young people in their personal and social development; 6. Assistance and follow up in securing and maintaining accommodation when young people exit the program.
Capacity	20 young people

Outreach/information/referral and support service

AREA	DESCRIPTION
Service Model	Ongoing external crisis intervention, support and/or specialist casework for young people 10 – 25 years within an outreach context (court, detention centre, street based) providing information, advocacy and follow up support.
Target Group and profile	Homeless and at-risk young people 12 – 25 years, with one service targeting 10-17. Young people who generally have intensive support needs including juvenile justice, under 16's. Worker to client ratio 1:20, encompassing outreach, intensive /complex casework and one-off information and referral facets.
Staffing Structure	1. One to three full time Youth Workers – SACS Level 5 2. One full time coordinator SACS 6 3. One full time Administrator/Book keeper SACS 3
Broad service outcome	1. Transitional support services, information, referral, advocacy and casework. 2. Case management approach designed around individual young people to ensure a flexible, responsive and appropriate response service to identified needs.
Objectives	1. Assisting and facilitating homeless and at-risk young peoples' access to accommodation and other appropriate transitional support services. 2. Crisis intervention and needs assessment. 3. Information and referral. 4. Specialist support and follow up.

	5. Establishing relationships with young people with the view to building ongoing casework relationships.
	6. Advocacy.
	7. Stimulate local community groups to an awareness of the problems facing young people in crisis in their own communities and to support young people to achieve independence or an appropriate alternative.
	8. Provision of a consistent point of contact for young people who choose not to access/are unaware of mainstream services.
	Information and resource development.
Capacity	20 young people per youth worker

IV: Part 1: Accountability Framework

Accountability framework

The review will examine:

- Establishment processes for the framework, including the 1999 Strategic Partners Report

- The extent to which parties to the SAAP IV agreement have complied with the framework

- Recent developments in program accountability provisions

- A redevelopment of the principles of appropriate accountability as they apply to homelessness service provision?

- The existing SAAP accountability Framework against the proposed principles?

- The capacity of the Accountability Framework to inform future policy and practice; and

- Provide advice on future accountability arrangements.

There are four strategic themes for SAAP IV:

- Client focused service delivery

- Increasing performance, knowledge and skills

- Integration and collaboration

- Working together

The performance measurements for the strategic themes are:

Service Delivery and Performance

Service Delivery and Performance includes indicators which can measure the extent to which the strategic themes of client focussed service delivery and increasing performance, knowledge and skills have been met.

	INDICATOR	REPORTING REQUIREMENT
QUALITY	1. The development, implementation and monitoring of quality improvement processes	Narrative report evidencing progress and results in this area
CLIENT OUTCOMES	2. Client case plan goals are achieved 3. Proportion of clients returning to SAAP service within six months	Quantitative data and explanatory notes using data from the national data collection, and part of the Productivity Commission report
ACCESS	4. Unmet need	Quantitative data and explanatory

		notes using data from the current collection and future enhancements
APPROPRIATENESS	5. The match of needs of all clients on entry with service provided	Quantitative data and explanatory notes using data from the national data collection and currently part of the Productivity Commission report
	6. Proportion of clients with an agreed support plan	This is new and will require work through the national data collection
	7. Evidence of timely interventions	
EFFICIENCY	8. Cost per day of support	Quantitative data and explanatory notes based on data from the national data collection and currently part of the Productivity Commission report

Systems development and enhancement

Systems development and enhancement include indicators which can measure the extent to which the strategic themes integration and collaboration and working together have been met.

INDICATOR	REPORTING REQUIREMENT
A planned response to meet a range and diversity of client needs	9. Narrative report demonstrating planning processes designed to include integration and collaboration across service systems
Evidence of good practice in joint program development and service delivery	10. Narrative report demonstrating and describing good practice

The four strategic themes have strong support in the youth sector as they cover the major areas that the program needs to focus on, further they have the ability to encompass the key issues facing young people and services. The QYHC is keen to have an indicator added and that is of "transparency".

Limitation of 'indicators' and 'reporting requirements'

Due to limited analysis that the indicators and reporting requirements provide, the sector is of the opinion that the indicators and reporting requirements are quite flawed.

The key concern from the sector is that the performance indicators are quite divorced from the reality of the lives of young people, including the lack of a grounded understanding of the issues that young people confront and what can achieve in any given timeframe. There is no recognition of the complexity or individuality of the needs of young people who utilise the SAAP service system eg in client outcomes one of the indicators is the "*proportion of clients returning to SAAP service within 6 months*", this could be either a positive or negative thing.

The sector also has concerns about the generic nature of the indicators and reporting requirements especially considering that adult models of services are fundamentally different to young people.   The responses to young people are along a continuum of care that includes a range of

interventions are currently not well reflected in the accountability framework.

Currently the indicators and reporting requirements cannot reflect geographic (metro, rural, regional) or target group diversity.

Further concerns of the performance measurements are that the expectations in relation to outcomes are unrealistic in a resource poor environment. There is a strong push from government to the sector to do more for less not acknowledging that SAAP is working to its full potential. Continuous improvement in the sector cannot go underfunded or be based on a subsidy model.

The performance measurements do not take into account the blockages in the exit points and the other external policy factors that impact on the ability for SAAP to undertake its functions. Availability of referrals for other services is limited in some geographical areas.

As a result the indicators that have been developed need to be modified and reflect the issues outlined above. Further qualitative and quantitative data and environmental scans should inform that 'indicators' and 'reporting requirements' that are developed. A more detailed response regarding data is included in Part 5 and Part 6 of this submission.

Some specific criticisms of the current indicators include:

- Remove Indicator 3
- There is a concern about Indicator 8 on efficiency as the cost per day of support is too generic, it doesn't allow for complex client cases and quality support to be noted
- Add issue of transparency as another indicator (including all levels in State welfare and their relationship with the sector)
- Indicators 5 (appropriateness; matching process needs) and 7 (timely interventions) are meaningless in a resource poor environment.

There is a need for client satisfaction to be another factor that provides guidance in the development of indicators and reporting requirements.

Need for increased transparency and accountability

There needs to be better mechanisms for the government to be accountable to the sector and the community.

The community and SAAP services need to have an active role in the development of the Bilateral agreements and in particular in the development of the Schedule 7.

The State welfare departments need to be more accountable around the breakdown of SAAP funding and its distribution including how the money is spent within the government ie how many staff are being employed, how much is being set aside for training, how much is being set aside for consultation and is any or how much is being spent on other government projects. The State welfare departments need to be accountable around the level of funding and what this can actually provide to young people.

Further there is a need for State welfare departments to support training / resourcing, professional development and networking.

In the understanding that the issues facing young people are multiple and the responses to their need holistic there needs to not only be accountability in the service provision but also in the coordination of government departments. SAAP services have initiated a range of protocols with various key stakeholders it is not always the case however that government policy enables statewide application of effective and efficient protocols. There needs to be coordinated and regular communication between State government departments, in particular welfare, health, housing and education, and with the community sector.

There needs to be a formal communication strategy between government departments responsible for the administration of SAAP and CAP and service providers. The lack of communication creates mistrust in the sector as services are not aware of the policy direction and activities of government. It is also extremely difficult to work in partnership if communication is only one way and the agenda that is driven is by government either at bureaucrat or political level.

There needs to be better communication between the State and Federal government and currently services feel that there is no constructive working relationship between the different levels of government. The discussions need to include a range of government departments including housing, education, health and supported accommodation. There needs to be a better understanding of the role that Local Government undertakes especially in rural and regional communities.

The current timeframe for the SAAP IV evaluation is a perfect example of the lack of respect for the role of the sector, its knowledge and experience.

Many of the reports that Commonwealth and the States release such as the Mid Term reports lack transparency and access. The Mid Term Report is a glossy document of program achievements from a government perspective, there is no input or reflections from the sector. The Queensland report for example outlined a range of initiatives however many of these were within the Child Protection portfolio area. This has nothing to do with how well the program is operating within its resource constraints. The report should have reported on how well SAAP was meeting Schedule 7.

What the above issues demonstrate is the poor planning process of government and the lack of engagement with the youth sector to explore the strategic points for program improvement.

V: Part 2: National Research Program

National Research Program

- Has the National research program identified the most appropriate topics for research?

- Have the projects that have been commissioned to date delivered what they were expected to?

- Have the research projects impacted on policy, thinking or practice in this area?

- What kinds of research might best contribute to policy and planning in future?

A large proportion of the youth sector was not aware of the National Research Program. Therefore by not having looked at the program and not being aware of the research being conducted it is impossible to assess whether the issues facing young people are covered. There certainly does not seem to have been any active promotion of the National Research Program.

The youth sector would like to have a process implemented where key issues facing young people are identified through needs based process by all key stakeholders.

Any research that is conducted must involve young people who are at risk of being homeless or who are homeless.

By having better engagement the research would have more relevance for policy and planning purposes. Further that any research that is conducted should be distributed into the SAAP sector. Any research that is being conducted must be able to be actioned or assist to inform the sector on strategic directions and practice frameworks.

The lack of engagement with the sector brings the question "Are government departments working effectively to support SAAP?" Some of the issues facing the young people have been long standing and with little or no resources directed to addressing them.

There needs to be a stronger relationship between the research topic and planning processes. Conversely government departments are not tracking trends and developing sector-wide interest or research projects. There is little evidence of links between research and service improvement because the links aren't demonstrated within the service and government systems.

Some of the topics that the youth sector would like to see covered would be:

- young women having safe accommodation;
- accommodation options for young people, mapping of young people's available options and choices;
- cross over between SAAP and disability services and shared family care.
- how to support substance affected young people in SAAP accommodation effectively, e.g. more resources and increase in health workers;
- research of safety issues for the one worker model in SAAP housing with six + young people, e.g. safety for young people, staff, neighbours and property
- cross over between SAAP and disability services and shared family care
- quantify:
  - How much SAAP money goes directly to service delivery?
  - How many young people supported through SAAP when they should be supported through other services (e.g. child protection, public housing, mental health)?

- research into service delivery and methodology; practical training programs.
- what about …
  - Contributing factors to multiple episodes of homelessness / SAAP access.

  - Outcomes of post-SAAP for young people; what are their experiences and pathways.

- young people's experiences of exclusion in SAAP services.
- research into the development of service models; are they the best ones for what we want to achieve.
- research into follow-up support outcomes and effectiveness.
- differences in support models for young people and adults.

VI: Part 3: Strategic Themes

Strategic themes in practice

This module will review:

- The capacity of the strategic themes to provide a framework for delivering effective partnerships and program management arrangements

- The capacity of the strategic themes to translate into specific State/Territory activities (Key Reporting Areas - KRA's)

- The appropriateness and utility of these KRA's

- The capacity of the strategic themes framework and KRA's to enable information to measure and report on outcomes generated for SAAP clients

- Strategic themes that might be adopted in the future

The Strategic Themes for SAAP IV are:

- Client focussed service delivery

- Integration and collaboration between SAAP and other service systems

- Increasing performance, knowledge and skill

- Working together

In Queensland these strategic themes were operationalised through the Schedule 7 and broadly labelled under the Renewing SAAP initiative. The projects that were initiated included:

- Needs analysis and mapping

- Sub Regional Service Integration – (SRSI) - in 4 areas of QLD only

- Viability and Benchmarking

- Standards in SAAP – currently in progress

- Access and Equity

- Indigenous homelessness

- Under 16 Guidelines

Other initiatives under the strategic themes included:

- Ministerial Advisory Arrangement

- Improved communication strategy between Department of Families Services and providers

- Funding reforms

- Improved responses to training via Integrated Skills Development Network (currently 1% of the SAAP budget)

- Flexible use of CSHA funds for SAAP services

Working together

The concept of the strategic themes and its related activities can provide a robust framework for planning and program management. The strategic themes are current and relevant for the ongoing development of the program.

In responding to the capacity of the strategic themes to provide a framework for developing effective partnerships and program management one of the key flaws that the youth sector identified was the lack of consultation on what the activities and KRA's would be. The youth sector supports the role of the State in developing the KRA's but wants more participation and transparency in the determination of the KRA's, especially as it is the non government sector that is providing service delivery. There needs to be common understandings and mutual agreements.

The development of the activities and the KRA should be firmly grounded in the issues facing the target group and the sectors' ability to respond to those needs. As Queensland is such a large State it is also important to recognise that there are vastly different issues between regions. The lack of real consultation and partnership with the sector by the government has created lack of trust between the sector and government; this is compounded by top down processes that are imposed on the sector with no real benefit to the service user.

In order to have partnerships and collaborative working arrangements it is essential that the government has a meaningful platform/forum/process for the sector to engage with government. In the development of the Schedule 7 one of the activities that the State government identified was the need for a Ministerial Advisory Arrangement and an improved communication strategy with SAAP services.

The Ministerial Advisory Arrangement (MAA) was established in Queensland at the start of the SAAP IV agreement. The MAA received very positive feedback from the sector and initiated a number of research reports. The MAA had good representation from the field including strong indigenous representation. The various MAA reports on public space, exclusions and indigenous issues provided robust advice to government on key homeless policy issues. To the disappointment of the sector the recommendations of these reports were ignored. In late 2002 with limited consultation with the sector the State Government abandoned the MAA.

Comments from the youth sector around the demise of the MAA include:

- What happened?

- Where is it?

- Why was it wound up?

- How does SAAP now have input into the Minister?

- Isn't it part of the Queensland Departments own written Schedule 7?

In Queensland currently there is no formalised mechanism for programmatic discussion or consultation with the SAAP sector. Needless to say there is a healthy scepticism in the field about the government ability to maintain its commitment and focus on the KRA's.

The identified need in Schedule 7 for an improved communication strategy has not materialised and at this point in time there is the least amount of liaison between the sector and the government. The youth sector strongly supports the need for better communication between the sector and all areas of government but in particular with the Department of Families and the Department of Housing. This is particularly important for the ongoing and common understanding of the key policy drivers of the program and the importance of the CAP as an integral part of the SAAP service system.

The only contact many services currently have with the Department of Families is through the regional offices. The main contact person in the regional officers is the Community Resource Officer (CRO). The function that these officers undertake is variable with the only common role being undertaken across the State is the negotiation of the service agreements. In many cases once the service agreement is signed the CRO may not make any further contact with the service.

The lack of consultation throughout the Schedule 7 process created a situation in Queensland where the implementation of the KRA was problematic. The rolling out of the activities was not in an orderly fashion and so 'foundation' projects were being implemented at the same time as 'follow-on' projects. For example the viability and benchmarking project was being conducted during the SRSI process. It soon became evident that it was impossible to do the SRSI project unless we had a clearer picture of the viability of the sector. In order to assess viability there needed to be service standards. As there are no standard throughout the State it is impossible to set benchmarks. The Department of Families is currently in the process of engaging with the SAAP sector on standards. It has become painfully clear to all that standards should have been identified first, from there an assessment of the viability of the sector could have been developed and benchmarks set in place to meet those standards. Lastly an exploration of service system integration could then have been more meaningfully conducted.

The lack of contact with the Department of Families and the inability for the SAAP sector to network together has hindered the capacity for the sector to discuss common policy issues and share practices about how to address these issues. Considering that many of the impacts on

homeless people need to be addressed structurally this has been a huge impact to the responses being developed.

A final comment on the Schedule 7 priorities are that they may be appropriate and the reporting mechanism accurate however all this is ineffectual if their influence on development is solely dependent on the political environment. There must be a level of commitment by the State to provide resourcing where this is required.

Client focused service delivery

The KRA's for this strategic theme was the Needs Analysis and Mapping, Viability and Benchmarking, the Access and Equity, indigenous homelessness and the Under 16 Guidelines project.

The Needs Analysis and Mapping project informed the sector as to the broad social and economic indicators for services at a State and Regional level. One of the key concerns about this project was whether the Department of Families has the capacity to keep this information current and relevant in order for the service system to be reliably informed on demographic and social trends.

As discussed previously a major issue in progressing the Viability and Benchmarking project was that the Standards project should have been conducted prior to this project commencing. As a result it was a difficult project to complete, again too limited liaison with the field in the development of the concept. The sector expended a lot of energy inputting into the process and in the course of the project there were many challenging debates on issues of service delivery relating to quality improvements. While some aspects of service quality improvement can be cost neutral most of the strategies identified required a level of improved resourcing.

The sector would have welcomed a closer working relationship in developing benchmarking recommendations.   Many services are disillusioned that post the Viability and Benchmarking project there has been very little progression of the issues and no identifiable outcomes.

Follow up and continuous improvement strategies of projects are not being considered as part of any of the project plans.   As outlined the needs analysis and viability and benchmarking projects have to some degree been discreet projects.

The Access and Equity project was an excellent project in engaging with the sector, addressing practice issues and meeting with the field to link policy and practice.   Unfortunately only one region in Queensland was resourced to implement meaningful access and equity processes that were owned by the field.

The Under 16 Guidelines was also an important project that provided guidance to the sector however again there was no follow up in the field to implement the guidelines. Further the youth sector has consistently identified the lack of protective responses to young people under the age of 16 and has been lobbying the State Government to implement whole of government responses for these young people – to no avail.

Relationship based models of work

The focus of supported accommodation is the support element not the housing component of the service. Therefore the processes that need to be developed and refined are those that centre on support.

Young people are an integral part of the community in which we live and they should be able to fully participate in this community. Social exclusion and marginalisation are common barriers for many young people accessing supported accommodation services. In working with young people who can no longer live at home services need to be wary of not developing a service model that 'welfarises' the lives of young people. This can create an environment where young people over time develop a dependency on a service rather than an independency on the service. 'Welfarising' can promote a work practice that is based on individual workers need to 'rescue' young people.

There can be a tendency to 'hide' welfarising and rescuing under the guise of 'duty of care'.

Case Management

The Department of Families implemented case management in SAAP. These processes are part of any assessment in working with people.

- Entry screening

- Assessment

- Planning

- Direct Service

- Coordination

- Monitoring and Review

- Case Closure/Exit Planning and follow-up

One of the unexpected outcomes from the introduction of this process was that it instigated a more 'rigid' and inflexible model of service delivery.

For the youth sector the implementation of case management and the younger clientele in some cases below the school leaving age ie 12 - 15, has meant that the relationship based model of work is no longer practiced. The younger age group has required a more structured approach due to the life stage of these young people and the duty of care issues within a service.

<u>In conclusion</u>

To a large degree the ability of the youth SAAP sector to respond appropriately, effectively and in a timely manner to young people is hindered by the lack of responses in other service system areas. SAAP is seen by other service systems as a 'dumping' ground for clients that they are either unwilling or unable to assist – under 16's is an excellent example of this practice.

Integration and collaboration between SAAP and other service systems

It is interesting to note therefore that one of the key reporting activities for the Department of Families was to trial in four areas of Queensland a Sub Regional Service Improvement (SRSI) Strategy. The broad aims for SRSI were to improve service responses and mix, clearer pathways for clients and enhanced linkages and coordination of services.

The SRSI provided quite diverse outcomes for different regions. The Gold Coast region is the only area that can identify that the SRSI helped the sector move forward and for real collaboration to occur. Post the SRSI the Gold Coast has continued to work on their recommendations and at this point have developed a local referral tool.

Increasing performance, knowledge and skill

In Queensland training is provided through the Integrated Skills Development Network. This training strategy has been received positively by the sector and people identify that one of the main reasons that this has occurred is because it is well resourced.

The sector has identified the need for professional development that focuses on practice frameworks.

Capacity of the service system

This module will review:

- What is the SAAP service system expected to do?

- What is the service system actually doing

- What is the service system achieving?

- What is the 'fit' between policy and program expectations, funding arrangements, and the capacity of the service system?

- Which arrangements appear to work best?

- What arrangements might be most appropriate for the future?

Principles

Supported accommodation should be firmly positioned in rights based social justice principles of:

Access:
Provision of assistance is free from any form of discrimination related to a person's country of birth, language, culture, race or religion.

Equity:
Assistance under SAAP is developed and delivered on the basis of fair treatment so that equality of outcomes is achieved for all eligible SAAP clients.

Participation:
All Queenslanders enjoy equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities to participate in, contribute to and benefit from all aspects of life in Queensland.

Empowerment:
Enable young people to make self determining choices and to action them.

Continuum

Supported accommodation is located within the crisis intervention and ongoing support element of the continuum of service delivery framework.

QYHC advocates for the continuation of the program within its current scope. It is not the role of supported accommodation to provide:

- an early intervention response - however there needs to be strong linkages between early intervention and supported accommodation

- an alternate care/out of home care service

- an affordable housing option
- support to young people in other tenures – except if this is follow-up support to a young person exiting a SAAP service

The role of SAAP needs to be recognised at every level of the program from the area manager, regional director through to a ministerial level.

Role and constraints

There has been much discussion about the level of support young people require in supported accommodation.

Essentially this debate should be about quality service delivery and so the focus should be on the staff/client ratios within support services. The level of support that is required by young people needs to be flexible and the focus should be on the service system being able to assess and respond flexibly to changing need. Young people enter into SAAP with a range of issues such as needing support to live independently, advocacy and referral, accommodation, child protection, drug and alcohol and mental health (to name a few).

The focus then can be on the 'throughput's' of a service ie if there is a high volume of young people being provided support by a service it can be assumed that many of these young people may only need low levels of support. If there were a low volume of young people accessing a service this would indicate that there are young people with high levels of support. This will also allow for greater accountability of the service to the community. Needless to say there needs to be a greater emphasis on case management and benchmarks utilising this system of support.

The key policy driver for SAAP is the support needs of the young people have who accessed the program.

The focus of the Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) should remain as the capital arm of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program either through capital assistance or head leasing. The policy drivers for the SAAP should drive CAP.

CAP funds should not be allocated for the provision of emergency relief and that the issue of emergency accommodation is jointly addressed through an increased capital works program and through the Emergency Relief Program.

It must be acknowledged that there needs to be a 'coordinated' approach to program development in SAAP/CAP at the departmental. Further that the development of this coordinated approach needs to be conducted by between and with all the relevant stakeholders in partnership. The Queensland SAAP III evaluation identified this partnership as being critical to the 'success' of meeting the needs of the target group.

To critically examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the SAAP requires an examination of the issues at both the service delivery level and the structural/policy level. This was a point during the last SAAP evaluation which stated (Queensland SAAP III Evaluation (p.xii));

> *"Effective client outcomes for SAAP will be determined as much by circumstance external to the program as by the quality and effectiveness of service delivery within SAAP. These external factors include not only macro-economic opportunities and housing affordability, but also access to a range of other community service programs such as family support, mediation services, counselling and others."*

QYHC also want it acknowledged that the SAAP funded services have been seriously affected in its capacity to work to its full potential due external pressures.

Fopp (1997) states

> *"… Supported accommodation services are in danger of becoming de facto housing options for many young people who do not need support, simply because there are few housing alternatives."*

This argument however does not mean that the program should only be a support program with no housing attached. It identifies the complexity of SAAP service delivery:

- lack of low cost/affordable housing for independent young people
- young people who have reached a point where they are ready for independent living cannot do so
- services are cross-subsidising by accommodating high and low support needs for financial viability purposes
- young people who need supported housing are missing out or waiting for long periods of time to access.

QYHC supports the need for an integrated service system, which has:

- Definable points of entry (this does not mean or equate with one point of entry)
- Formal processes of assessment of client need (this is able to be conducted through the case management approach and is clearly a training and professional development issue)
- Range and balance of service response (defined by the local community)
- Defined pathways between crisis and other types of responses (however it is the client who determines the path they will follow with the support of services and that the pathways between services and support systems need clearly defined protocols)
- Follow up support for young people exiting SAAP

One of the growing issues for youth service funded from the SAAP is the increasing numbers of young people under 18 accessing their services, more particularly young people between the ages of 12 to 16 years of age.

By accommodating young people under 16 in a formal sense the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program is moving into the area that is the responsibility of the State. In the process of doing so young people 18- 25 years no longer have the ability to enter into the SAAP through the youth housing system.

If young people aged 18 – 25 are not able to access SAAP they need to be housed somewhere else in the housing sector. Young people who may not have the living skills are moving into community housing and these housing placements are breaking down. Housing providers are identifying that young people in their housing require support to maintain their housing. The key issue is that young people have limited housing options and are accessing housing that does not meet their needs and no amount of external support will be adequate.

While there has always been the need to accommodate young people under the age of 16 there seem to be some clear trends that indicate the youth services funded from SAAP may soon be the only accommodation response for these young people. There would seem to be implications for the whole service system from the alternate care through to the housing sectors and for the young people that ultilise all these services.

It may be worth noting the historical issues relating to young people 'in care' who are now being accommodated by youth housing services funded through SAAP.

- Often they were referred to SAAP funded services as an end on the line measure because there was no option left for a young person;
- SAAP funded service provider often expressed concern about young people 'in care' entering SAAP services for a range of reasons often related to their ongoing safety and well being, particularly in the case of short-term shelter placements;

- Young people may have ended up in youth funded SAAP services by default because the statutory child protection system was unable to meet their needs.

It is critical that these historical factors remain at the forefront of our thinking about supported accommodation services funded from SAAP and child protection responses, because they clearly indicate that youth funded SAAP services are in a position of:

- Formalizing service delivery that occurred due to a drift of young people into these services because the child protection system could not respond to young people's needs which does not equate to providing innovative planned responses to the needs of young people;
- Participating in cost and responsibility shifting that will hide the reality of chronic under resourcing in this area;

Of importance is the cost and responsibility shifting from the DFYCC on a range of other service systems. The NDCA annual report 1998/9 identifies a growth in the under 15 year and the 15 –19 year age groups in the program and a decline in the numbers of young people in the 20 –24 category between the 1996/7 – 1998/9. Anecdotally in Queensland there has been a dramatic increase of young people under 16 years of age in crisis shelters.

The reason as to why this may be occurring could be put down to:

- The lack of focus by DFYCC on adolescents (12-18) and the legislative changes with regard to the Departments role re: young people in care.
- Decreasing numbers of foster carers willing to accommodate adolescents due to a lack of adequate support when housing these young people.
- Lack of support for alternate care models.
- That the service models in SAAP are more suitable for some young people rather than residential care facilities or foster care models.

Organisational capacity

The major and undeniable constraint in the service system is the lack of beds. Related to this is the lack of appropriate accommodation for young people with complex needs.

Another major issue for services is the lack of staffing, all youth shelters in Queensland currently have only one staff member on at night often with 6-8 young people.

In recent years there has also been an incredibly difficulty in trying to recruit and retain staff. The inability to compete with government in the level of wages that the sector can offer means that many people are opting to work in better paid work.   The lack of resourcing also means that it is difficult to support staff and to release them for training, networking and other sector development improvement processes.   Many

staff are also having to undertake a number of administrative support functions and this is exacerbated as the size of the organisation decreases. In turn staff spend precious hours seeking further funding or attempting to explore alternate funding sources.

Coordinators

Coordinators in particular undertake a huge number of tasks. Coordinators primary task is organisational management and will undertake case management where appropriate to the organisation. The coordinator ensures the quality standards within an organisation. The tasks that coordinators undertake are many and varied and may include one or all of the following tasks:

- Organisational management

- Administrative (internal Policy and Procedures development, implementation and review, Strategic and operational Planning, Liaison with funding bodies, Service agreements, Workplace Health and Safety, Marketing and Public relations, Insurance)

- Financial (Budgets, Audits, Accounts)

- Resource development (submission writing, Project management)

- Human Resource Management (Conversant with Industrial Relations Act, Development of position descriptions, Recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers, Training for staff and volunteers, Staff supervision, Staff grievances. Provision of up to date and relevant information for staff body)

- Broad policy development (Engagement in policy development processes of government ie SRSI, Network with relevant stakeholders)

- Casework (Monitoring the quality standards of the service, Provision of casework where appropriate)

The development of a coordinator position through the utilisation of a number of funding sources needs to be reflected in a whole of government approach. This means that all funding sources must acknowledge the need for organisational management costs including that of coordinator. Until this approach is adopted there is no ability for services to combine funding to create a coordinators position. Further that there is acknowledgment that this funding is 'on-top of' not detracted from the existing funds allocated.

Remuneration for coordinators needs to be set at a level that is commiserate with the skills and knowledge required for the position.

It is worthwhile making a comparative example to the Department of Families Team Leader position, the functions that that position undertakes and the remuneration that this position is entitled to. The remuneration for the position is PO4 $ 2.194.20 - 2,363.90 p/f (57,245 -61,672 per annum. This is not comparable to the SACS let alone the CASH Award.

Dep't Families	SACS	CASH
PO 4 57,245 -61,672 per annum	SACS 8.3 54,966 per annum	CASH Level 4 (Category A) 45, 799 per annum

Administrative staffing

Regardless of the size of an organisation there are some administrative tasks that need to be carried out in all organisations. For some organisations there is a split between the administrative support tasks and bookkeeping. The funding of positions need to take into account the costs associated with both functions.

The administrative functions that need to be completed in any organisation include administrative support and bookkeeping.

The overall administrative tasks of an organisation are becoming increasingly complex. Further the introduction of the National Accountancy Framework has required organisation to have an increased level of skill in their financial management systems. Due to the diversity of tasks required for the position of administrator (administrative support and bookkeeping) it is increasing difficult to compete in the job market and attract appropriately trained staff.

Rates of pay as of 26.9.02

	Clerical Award Weekly pay (gross)	SACS Award (top increment) Weekly pay (gross)	CASH Award Cat A (top increment) Weekly pay (gross)
Level 1	498.20	526.90	615.17
Level 2	525.20	587.69	698.88
Level 3	566.90	650.46	759.65
Level 4	585.80	734.17	880.75
Level 5	627.50	794.96	
Level 6		922.06	
Level 7		989.55	
Level 8		1057.04	

Considering the nature of the work that is undertaken by administrative staff there is a requirement of at least a 0.5 position within each organisation.

That the administrator position (based on administrative support and bookkeeping duties outlines above) be pegged at level 3 of the SACS Award.

Viability of services

At the core of organisational capacity is the ability for service to be viable. There are a variety of methods that can be utilised to measure the viability of an organisation. These include:

Financial viability – inputs (costs) and outputs (outcomes for the target group).

The critical area in determining financial viability is to determine all the components in order to be able to conduct a comprehensive costing.

Different models will have certain line items that other models would not require. However it is important to be able to identify all cost areas.

Wages

There are a number of issues surrounding the awards (Crisis Accommodation Supported Housing Award and Social and Community Services Award) currently applicable in the sector. These are:

1. Application of the award -
   For some services the introduction of the Award into the workplace has been relatively easy, as the Award that they have chosen is applicable to the whole workplace. For other services the introduction of the Award/s has not been as easy as there has been a need to utilise more than one Award (for some services who are still utilising the Clerical Award this may mean having 3 Awards within the one workplace). The use of the CASH and the SACS Award in some services has been due to the higher administrative tasks that some coordinators undertake. There is clearly a need for government to have a better understanding of the employment 'make-up' of services and the Award implications.

2. Funding for the payment of the award-
   For all services the funding of the Award to the mid-point has created extreme financial difficulty. There was a strong agreement that government funding needs to be at the highest pay-point of the relevant Award. In some cases services have been forced to change their hours of operation in order to meet the Award costs.

3. Variation in the funding of the award by services -
   There is an issue about the levels of funding due to the variations between services. These variations maybe due to the size of the organisation, its structure and therefore the variations in the tasks that youth workers and coordinators undertake within each service.

It was noted that the formula for determining the % for on-costs needed to be based on the funding of the Award at the top increment.

Each of the models articulated above demonstrates a minimum staffing level and nominates an Award wage costs.

On-costs include   -   sick leave
                   -    annual leave (for 4 weeks)
                   -    long service leave
                   -    relief staff
                   -    workers compensation

Other wages costs are:

I.   Night and evening penalties

There is a clear need for the terminology across services to be consistent in relation to shifts. As a result:

▪   Night shift   - Monday to Friday 5pm to midnight – 12% loading

▪ Evening – Monday to Friday midnight to 8am – 15% loading

II. On-call

This is mainly conducted through a pager system. Most services are covering this cost through a TOIL system. Items that need further consideration include: What per hour rate would be reasonable for having a pager? What per hour rate would be reasonable on a call-out? Furthermore what is the legal liability with regard to call-outs and so what should be the minimum staff that responds?

III Weekend overtime

IV Public Holidays
Currently government is not paying services the costs associated with Public Holidays. This needs to be incorporated into any future funding formula.

Operational costs

The following items are associated with operational costs:

Rates	Audit/Legal	Supervision	Food
Minor maintenance	Insurance (public liability, professional indemnity, volunteers)	Training	Non-perishable Goods (Clothes)
Repairs	Travel/vehicle (m/v lease and public service rates)	Library	Ambulance
Building Insurance	Printing, photocopying and	Subscriptions	Resource development (Developing resources

	stationary		for young people, excursions)
Utilities (gas and electricity	Postage		
Capital	Management Committee expenses		
	Telephone/fax		

There is nothing worse that making young people feel that they are undeserving when they are in supported accommodation. This is in particular reference to food – young people should have access to good quality food and it is acknowledged that this is sometimes hard to do with a full house and limited resources.

An organisation cannot operate without an infrastructure and this includes the need for capital items. All budgets should also include a capital line item.

Insurance has been a major cost to services and this needs to be considered in future funding formulas.

Any funding of depreciation should be based on the audited statement of services.

An establishment budget should be included as part of any CAP grant.

An organisation will also receive funding from a range of other sources such as:

- Donations - these funds belong to the incorporated associations and accountability for the use of these funds is only to the membership of the organisation
- Interest- interest of grant monies need to be rolled into the grant account, interest of self-earnings will go into an organisations account.
- Rent
  - A lack of income should not be a barrier to a young person accessing SAAP.
  - Rent should only be collected in semi and externally supported models, in crisis and medium term shelter there may be a contribution by the young person towards board.
  - The calculation of rent should be at 25% of a young person income support payment or net income

- **Organisational viability** – this is whether an organisation has the appropriate structures, policies and procedures in order that it can meet its legal and service obligations.

- **Locational viability** – this is whether the service is in the best location to meet the needs of the target group.

Services need to be located close to transport, shops and other services.

Due to the nature of the SAAP services they should be given the first option to purchase their properties rather than leasing.

Impact on service delivery

The lack of beds often means that young people do not make choices about where they can be accommodated. Youth services advocate the need for young people to be able to make informed choices about their accommodation.

Young people may not be accommodated in the most appropriate model of service based on their needs, in many cases young people with high and complex needs may not be able to be accommodated on any given night. Services strongly support the need for young people to have non discriminatory access to services and for a range of housing models that meet a range of needs.

Services also recognise the need to be able to respond flexibly to young people and to be able to provide follow-up support once they exit the service. In many cases this is limited due to the resourcing of the service and the lack of recognition of the importance of follow up support.

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program is not resourced adequately to be able to implement a 'first through the door policy'. The issue of who will be housed is therefore not as easy as it first sounds. There needs to be an acknowledgment that there are a range of needs that young people will present to a service with and in many cases it is impossible to tell (either through the physical appearance of a young person and an initial interview) what sort of issues young people are dealing with and how this may affect their behaviour and their behaviour with others. Further young people's needs may fluctuate and it is impossible to set arbitrary timeframes on the amount of time they may require from the service. Placing a 'type' or characteristic stigmatises people and in the process devalues them as individuals.

Services in dealing with their intake need to take into consideration a number of factors:

▪ Household type and household numbers - because there is generally only one staff on overnight there needs to be consideration around the household mix. This is a duty of care issue.

▪ Staff skill level - the household mix is considered in the light of the level of staff training, skills and expertise on a any given night

VIII: Part 5 & 6: National Data Collection and IMP

National data collection

This module will review:

- Is the 'right' data being collected?

- Are the 'right' collection methods being used?

- Is the output of the National Data Collection (NDC) meeting the information needs of stakeholders?

- Is the data being effectively disseminated?

- How has the NDC contributed to public accountability/program effectiveness

- Does the usefulness of the NDC justify its costs?

- Is the NDC contributing to futures policy thinking?

Information Management Plan

The modules will review:

- The documentation that established the Information Management Plan (IMP) and its intended outcomes;

- Progress made in implementing the IMP (including the Service and Regional Research Projects) including an assessment of implementation against guiding principles, objectives and strategies;

- Use of IMP information and impact on SAAP sector of the staged IMP implementation

- Unanticipated or unplanned changes in implementation of the IMP;

- Capacity of the output of the IMP to inform future policy and practice; and

- Possible future directions and implementation directions.

National Data Collection/Information Management Plan

Data is only a tool that provides limited information and is open to interpretation.

There is support in the youth sector for the collection of data and for this to be supported through other research and longitudinal studies particularly focussing on systems analysis and gaps.

It is generally considered that the National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) data currently being collected has more usefulness at a State and National level as opposed to a service level. The youth sector values the data in highlighting broad trends in youth homelessness. There is however a lack of understanding in the sector as to how the data collected is used for planning purposes by government. A greater transparency is required in regard to the use of data by government. The Department of Families should be accountable for planning service delivery based on data collection – e.g. if x% of SAAP clients are under 16 then better services should be provided by Department of Families under their child protection mandate.

There is a strong concern around the validity of the data. There is criticism that both the casual client data and the unmet need data do not reflect the actual demand for services and services feel that this is because of how the data is collected – twice yearly, one week blocks. There is also concern that data skewed by non consent. Conversely the lack of consent may be from more complex needs clients who are concerned about giving consent. Unfortunately services and in turn client feel a certain pressure to obtain/provide consent. In terms of consent the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition would support an 'opt in' system for seeking client consent.

Services would like to have implemented a more user friendly process/mechanism to challenge the data is presented to them. Services would like also like the ability to be able to count clients (but not take their details) if they do not give consent.

Data does not reflect nor can it reflect the actual work that is undertaken in the sector with young people or the relationship based model of work.

The data also does not accurately represent the issues facing young people, the complexity of their issues or the real progress that young people may make considering the abusive relationships that they have moved out of. Continuing on this theme, the data on entry and exit points from the service do not reflect the prior and post circumstances other than immediate needs. The goals that are listed as being achieved are too broad.

There is some further concern in that there is an ambiguity of definition of client and as a result the undercounting of young people using a service to this definition eg if a young person enters your service for less than 25 minutes but does so intermittently and in an unplanned manner for a week they are not counted as a client.

The period of homelessness is subjective and it must be recognised that young people and workers may interpret all the questions on the data forms differently from agency to agency.

The complexity of people's lives cannot be accurately reflected in the data nor can the level of assessment that leads to the type of intervention. For example a young person may be the primary client for a youth service however in the process of working with the young person there may be a considerable amount of work conducted with the family – parents and siblings. It however may not be appropriate to request from the family consent for data collection purposes. The level of assessment cannot be seen through the data collection process however the lack of ability to demonstrate the skill level of workers doesn't legitimise worker knowledge or professional judgement.

The data collected through the NDCA system is from a client perspective and cannot accurately reflect service issues and perspectives - nor should it. Queensland Youth Housing Coalition supports the focus on the client and this is also consistent with the client focus. Data analysis on the numbers of young people entering through the service system is important however there needs to be a better understanding and reflection on the amount of time that may be required for each service user.   If a young person has a high need or is going through a particular difficult period a worker will spend more time with this young person than with a young person with lower support needs.

In looking at the data it must also be recognised that there are a range of service models that undertake a number of different functions. Further some services operate a number of accommodation and housing responses for young people along the continuum of care and this needs to be recognised the policy level. There has been much discussion about the level of support young people require in supported accommodation. Essentially this debate should be about quality service delivery and on the staff/client ratios required to operate support services.   The level of support that is required by young people needs to be flexible and the focus should be on the service system being able to assess and respond flexibly to changing need. The focus then can be on the 'throughput's' of a service ie if there is a high volume of young people being provided support by a service it can be assumed that many of these young people may only need low levels of support. If there were a low volume of young people accessing a service this would indicate that there are young people with high levels of support.   This will also allow for greater accountability of the service to the community. Needless to say there needs to be a greater emphasis on case management and benchmarks utilising this system of support.

One of the greatest issues for services and young people is the lack of protection being provided by the State. The data collection does not reflect the complexity of the under 16 issue from a rights framework, a child protection framework, a service delivery framework let alone considering what it means for the young person.

The data form need to have a regular process of review and this must be conducted with services at face to face meetings (unlike the 1998 review

of the data collection).   Some of the areas where the data could be improved are:

- In the client form under the "support to client" service would like to see included self and depression as separate categories – services do not want self harming/ suicideality included under the broad category of mental illness
- In the client form under the "support to client" the mental health category needs to be more detailed and have sub sections underneath it
- In the client form some areas which are together should be separate categories
- The client form should include young women
- In the client form "other" is not reflected in the reporting back to services in the sector and change other to be able to add what we mean by it
- How are some emerging trends being identified through the "other" options
- Everybody accessing must be counted. Parent / child not getting detailed actual clients, e.g. who is the client and how many when families are also being supported by workers.   Children must be included in the data collection process as clients in their own right although an exploration of the ethical considerations around their anonymity must first be considered.

In smaller services there is a level of concern about the time consuming nature of the data collection in terms of its impact on service delivery. There are limited outcomes for the effort to date. A major barrier to inputting data is that resources are limited in accessing up to date computer systems and hardware. Training and support for people to utilise the Smart computerised data systems is required in order to effect positive cultural change in services

Due to the limited usefulness of the data set to services for service planning and evaluation most services have an additional internal data collection system process that is more reflective of what is happening. Services are of the opinion that the quantitative nature of the data has limited value at the grassroots level especially due the fact that demand outstrips supply in such a dramatic level.

Services strongly feel that qualitative data would have greater benefit for them. There also needs to have more longitudinal studies.

Services are also keen to be able to have an ability to have comparison of similar models (taking into consideration funding levels and regional variations).

There was also concern expressed by youth services that there was a lack of uniformity of the data collection across program areas.   This results in a limitation of the use of the wider data collection process across programs and to be able to have an analysis across the continuum of support – especially in larger services. Service strongly want it noted however that other programs should meet the NDCA standards not the other way around ie strong protection around confidentiality.

Service also expressed that the IMP needed to be related to the sector development processes relating to practice and quality improvement strategies. To date there is a limited understanding of the IMP and its component parts. Further that while some of the SRRP projects may have been useful and purposeful there is a limited ability to share this knowledge across the sector. Services also want to use the SPPR process to research gaps that they identify and quality improvement strategies. A key question from services that are not familiar with writing research proposal is how they are being assisted to enable them to participate in research. Clearly formalised support strategies for these services need to be developed.

IX: Current QYHC Policy Framework

Definition of young people

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition defines young people as being between the ages of 12 to 25 years. However this does not imply that the Coalition is of the opinion that the accommodation and housing responses will be the same for all young people in this age cohort.   Consideration should be given to age, support needs and skill levels when developing responses to young people's accommodation and housing needs.   The focus of the work of the Coalition is on young people no longer living in the family home.

Further there are a number of legislative frameworks that guide accommodation and housing responses to young people. In generally the Coalition breaks down the age group into three sub groups: 12–15, 16-18 and 19-25.

For young people between the ages of 12 – 18 there are a number of understandings that form the basis of QYHC position;

- Young people aged 12-18 have needs that are observably different to those under 12.
- Young people aged 12-18 who are unable to live with their family and have protective needs are clearly the responsibility of Families Youth and Community Care Queensland, the statutory child protection authority;
- Young people aged 12-18 who are unable to live with their family, whether in care and protection or not access SAAP services.

For young people aged 12-18 the provision of accommodation options outside a statutory framework (ie residential care, foster care) should not preclude linkages with existing intervention services and the funding of new intervention services under the Child Protection and Family Support Funding Program. For this age group the discussion about service delivery needs to move beyond a question of 'in or not in care' to a discussion about how statutory and non-statutory responses to young people's protective needs can compliment one another.

For young people aged 16 to 25 years there are a range of accommodation and housing models across tenures (located in the 'crisis intervention and ongoing support' and 'post crisis housing' continuum of service delivery framework) that have been developed that meet a range of needs. The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition supports the need for a variety of tenures that provide young people with a choice of their housing.   In doing so QYHC however the Coalition believes that the diversification of housing choices should not be done at the expense of a particular tenure (in the current context this being public housing).

The following groups face particular disadvantage due to cultural and social impacts, these include:

- Young people with intellectual disability or learning difficulty;
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people;
- Young people from diverse cultural backgrounds;
- Young people with psychiatric illness;
- Gay/lesbian/bisexual and transgender young people;
- Young people with substance abuse issues.

QYHC Policy Framework

Over the last decade we have come to understand youth homelessness as a process. While each young person's story is unique there are common trends that can lead young people from the family home to chronic homelessness. These understandings have resulted in the reshaping of responses to youth homelessness and an increased focus on early intervention and the maintenance of family and community links.

One of the key issues in exploring points of intervention is to acknowledge that the use of terms must be contextualised in a place and time. What the literature over the last 18 years has shown is that as our comprehension of the issues' increases the language that we use to describe our understanding changes in its meaning. When looking at the continuum of service delivery clearly one of the key language changes is how the terms prevention and early intervention are interpreted. Therefore in looking at the continuum of service delivery government and non-government services need to re-think how language is used and whether the language you are using is contemporary.

The QYHC wants to clearly articulate that early intervention is where risk factors have been identified, yet harm has not occurred and that crisis intervention is where harm has occurred. It is recognised however that there are grey areas in the continuum due to the individual nature of homelessness and the variation in the level of service delivery in communities. It must also be noted that when young people make the permanent break from home and school they become homeless in a very short time period. Wilson and Day in their examination of the SAAP data on under 16's found that:

> …the majority of young people under 16 years of age who came into contact with services did so very early in the homelessness episode. As shown in the table below, around 80% of young people seeking assistance from SAAP were identified as being at imminent risk of homelessness (and presumably were either still at home or in some other relatively stable housing option) or as having been homeless for less than 2 weeks. Indeed, around 41% of young people under 16 were still living with either one or both of their parents when they established contact with the service, compared to 19% of older young people. This suggests that SAAP services are well placed to act at this point to reduce the proportion of very young people making the permanent break from home.

Table 5: SAAP support periods, duration of current period of homelessness

	Number	Per cent
At imminent risk	241	39.3
0-2 weeks	244	39.8
>2-4 weeks	26	4.2
>4-26 weeks	52	8.5
>26-52 weeks	20	3.3
>52-104 weeks	15	2.4
>104 weeks	15	2.4
Not answered	417	.
Total	1,030	100.0

- Note: percentage figure relates to number of clients known to be in each category, and excludes those clients for whom the question was not answered.

Of the 39% who had already left their parental home, around half were living with friends or relatives in temporary arrangements. It seems reasonable to assume that a large proportion of these young people had only recently left home, and they clearly maintained some linkages with social support networks. For these young people as well, the potential for intervention to prevent the transition to chronic homelessness may be considerable.

The role of SAAP is as a crisis service however SAAP services are well placed to refer young people to early intervention and family support services. There needs to more exploration of the role of youth crisis services but it is clear that if a early intervention/under 16 worker were to be placed in SAAP funded services it may assist in limiting the numbers of young people who could potentially transition into chronic homelessness.

There is a need to have common understanding of what people mean by:
- Prevention
- Early intervention
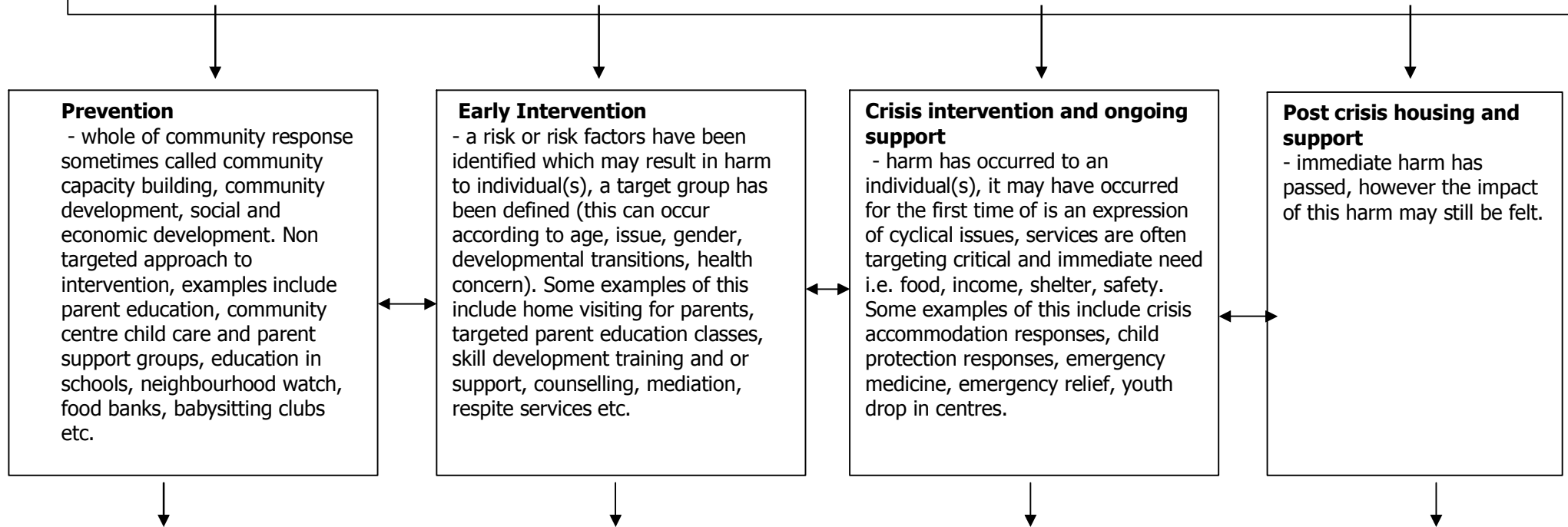- Crisis and supported accommodation
- Post crisis housing

The level of isolation from community, disadvantage and marginalisation increases from prevention through to crisis intervention. The process of how young people move through this in not in a linear fashion, however as stated earlier a lack of resources in prevention or early intervention mean that a significant point of contact in relation to community services is with those services providing crisis responses.

The framework attempts to construct a comprehensive strategy that builds upon the protective factors in a community – this is sometimes included in the labelling of community capacity building (if using the social justice understanding of this term).

This framework is compatible with the findings of the Chamberlain and MacKenzie report that identifies there are a number of transition points before young people make the permanent break from home.   The report also identifies that young people may become chronically homeless if they are not supported in dealing with the critical issues that are confronting them. Further the notes that the transition points are not fixed in time and are individual to each young person's situation and other social factors. The transition points identify that there are a range of intervention points that can assist young people and their families.

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition will continue to advocate and work towards increasing supply and diversity of housing to meet young people 's housing needs, and in doing so providing young people with equity in opportunity to attain their personal goals.

Issue: Future of accommodation and support for young people aged 12 – 25 years

Prevention
- whole of community response sometimes called community capacity building, community development, social and economic development. Non targeted approach to intervention, examples include parent education, community centre child care and parent support groups, education in schools, neighbourhood watch, food banks, babysitting clubs etc.

Early Intervention
- a risk or risk factors have been identified which may result in harm to individual(s), a target group has been defined (this can occur according to age, issue, gender, developmental transitions, health concern). Some examples of this include home visiting for parents, targeted parent education classes, skill development training and or support, counselling, mediation, respite services etc.

Crisis intervention and ongoing support
- harm has occurred to an individual(s), it may have occurred for the first time of is an expression of cyclical issues, services are often targeting critical and immediate need i.e. food, income, shelter, safety. Some examples of this include crisis accommodation responses, child protection responses, emergency medicine, emergency relief, youth drop in centres.

Post crisis housing and support
- immediate harm has passed, however the impact of this harm may still be felt.

OUTCOME: Safety and well being of young people and support of their families

RESPONSES TO NEED:

RESPONSES TO NEED:

Youth Support Coordinators Reconnect

RESPONSES TO NEED:

SAAP

RESPONSES TO NEED:

Transitional housing ie CRS

Young people's participation in consultative processes, planning and decision making

Australia's is a signatory to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Conventions of the Rights of the Child. The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 21 (I) Everyone has a right to take part in the government of his (sic) country, directly, or through freely chosen representative. Articles 12 and 13 of this Convention of the Rights of the Child stipulate the right of young people under the age of majority to participate in political and legal processes, in accordance with the persons' age and maturity.

The Queensland State Governments is currently expressing its commitment to young people through the Youth Participation Charter and Strategy.

The National Children's and Youth Law Centre provides an example of principles that should underlie young people's participation.

- Be by choice
- Be enjoyable, challenging and fun
- Be related to issues perceived as real by young people
- Raise young peoples awareness to social, political, economic and personal aspects that affect them
- Involve training and skill development
- Involve planning via the development of goals and strategies
- Offer accountability and challenge in decision making
- Provide opportunities for building active supportive relationships between young people and the community
- Provide young people with a sense of belonging and ownership in the process
- Involve adequate resourcing including time, space, funding and information
- Encourage collective action at all times to assist links with other networks and young people

It is clear to the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition that a range of mechanisms need to be put in place for young people's voices to be heard.

Client satisfaction Survey

The QYHC would strongly advocate for client satisfaction to be included in all aspects of SAAP

QYHC is concerned that the client satisfaction survey was used for the SAAP IV evaluation. It was an inappropriate tool and certainly not user friendly. Some services who were part of the process want it clearly noted that it was not the lack of unwillingness of young people to participate but that were not comfortable with the survey format.

X: Background and Historical Contexts

Overview of section x

This section of the submission has been written to highlight that the numbers of young people who are homeless has not declined in recent years. Further that there are significant number of young people who are unable to live at home.

There is no need to provide more evidence on the numbers of young people or the issues that they are facing. Young people and their advocates have clearly indicated the need and the type of responses that need to occur to meet their need.

Young people in Queensland

Table 1: Number of young people in Queensland (ABS 1996)

Age	Males	Females	Total	% of pop
12 – 15	102238	96 205	198 443	5.98
16 - 18	71991	68 974	140 965	4.25
19 - 25	179 224	177122	356 346	10.74
Total	353 453	342 301	695 754	20.97

Of young people aged 12 – 25 years, 3.9% reported as being of Indigenous origin, and almost 12% of young people in Queensland were born overseas (ABS 1996).

Young people (12-25) reported being more mobile than older people; the census found over half (53%) reporting a different address than five years earlier. Young women were more likely to have moved than young men. Most of this movement was within the state.

- 23.54 % of young people aged 15–25 were living with their parents as dependent children
- 21.83% of young people aged 15 -25 were living with their parents as non-dependent children
- 35.38% of young people aged 15-25 were living independently
- 5.47% were in a non-private dwelling or reported no usual address

Of the 35.38% of young people who were living independently:

- 12% of young people lived with unrelated people in shared households
- 23.38% of young people lived in their own households
- couple
- couple with children
- sole parent with children
- alone

Very few young people own their own home.

> *"A higher proportion of young people in Queensland were living independently than in any other State or Territory" (ABS, 1996).*

Young women (20%) are twice as likely as young men (10%) to have moved out of the family home, to establish their own relationships and families. Higher proportions of Indigenous young people had established their own relationships and families (26% of young women and 11% of young men) (ABS, 1996).

Table 2: Number of young people in Queensland (ABS 2001)

Age	Male	Females	Total	% of pop
12 – 15	107 512	102 334	209 846	
16 – 18	80 472	78 563	159 035	
19 – 25	174 690	176 332	351 012	
Total	362 674	357 219	719 893	

The paper by Terry Burke, Sarah Pinkney and Scott Ewing [1] of the AHURI Swinburne-Monash Research Centre found that:

- Compared to two decades ago, young people are leaving home later. Whilst there was a slight increase (from 11.2% to 12.0%) between 1991 and 2000 in the proportion of 15-19 year olds who were in independent living, these levels are considerably less than the 15.5% recorded in 1981.
- Seventy-five per cent of tertiary students undertaking full-time studies live at home
- In 2000, just on one-third of all young people aged 15-24 were in independent living. By age 24, 70% had left home.

Young persons living independently and living at home by age group,
1981, 1991 and 2000 ('000s)

	1981			1991			2000		
Age	**15-19**	**20-24**	**15-24**	**15-19**	**20-24**	**15-24**	**15-19**	**20-24**	**15-24**
Living at Home	1,072	482	1,554	1,111	611	1,722	1,098	580	1,678
Percentage	85%	38.3%	61.5%	88.8%	47.1%	67.6%	88.0%	45.5%	66.5%
Independent Living	196	778	974	140	685	825	150	696	846
Percentage	15.5%	61.7%	38.5%	11.2%	52.9%	32.4%	12.0%	54.5%	33.5%
Total	1,268	1,260	2,528	1,251	1,296	2,547	1,248	1,276	2,524

Source: ABS, Labour Force Statistics and Other Characteristics of Families, Cat. no. 6224.0

[1] Burke, Pinkney &Ewing

Estimation of youth homelessness

Due to the nature of youth homelessness it is hard to estimate the numbers of youth homelessness. In recent years there have been a number of studies that have attempted to enumerate the numbers and trends relating to homeless young people. Oversees and Australian attempts have found definitional, methodical and statistical difficulties[2].

Of particular concern for the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition is not only the fact that there are homeless young people but that for young people between the ages of 12 and 16 there is an increasingly complex and fragmented service system which they need to negotiate.

The paper by Tim Wilson and Jenny Day[2] exploring the issues facing young people under the age of 16 note that:

> " *many (young people) are affected by the child protection, education, income support and homelessness service systems, which are individually strained, and collectively poorly coordinated".* [2]

In terms of young people under 18 years of age the most notable national homelessness report/s have been those conducted by Chamberlain and Mackenzie. The Chamberlain and Mackenzie report [3] released in 2001 identifies that there were approximately 26, 060 homeless young people between the ages of 12 – 18 years (using the definitions of homelessness as articulated by the report) in Australia during the census week. The average rate of homelessness for Australia was 14 per 1000. Queensland and Western Australia had the 3rd highest rate of homeless at 18 per 1000.

There were 12,227 homeless secondary student in Australia or 10 per 1000 during the census week. The rate of homelessness across the states varied, in Queensland there were 3,073 young people or 15 per 1000 (Queensland had the 2nd highest rate of homeless student per 1000). The report also attempts to identify the effectiveness of the 'system' to keep young people at school by examining the numbers of school and TAFE students as a % of the homeless population. In Queensland about 39% of the homeless are still in education, 60% are unemployed and 1% are in full-time work.

NDCA

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[2] Strategic Partners, April 2001, Technical Forum on the Estimation of Homelessness in Australia
[2] Wilson and Day, 2001, Paper for the National Housing Conference 2001
[3] Chamberlain and MacKenzie, 2001, Youth Homelessness

National data collection supports the high rate of youth homelessness. The NDCA data revealed 6450 young people in Queensland, some under 15 and up to the age of 24 years utilised the SAAP service system in 2000/01.

In Queensland the figures are:

Table 3: SAAP clients Under 15 years seeking assistance

Year	Total SAAP clients	Number under 15 years	% under 15 years
1996-97	14,850	356	2.4
1997-98	16,500	396	2.4
1998-99	15,300	428	2.8
1999-2000	15,950	415	2.6
2000 - 2001	17,600	450	2.4
2001–2002		450	2.4

Table 4: SAAP clients – young people

Year	15 - 17	%	18 - 19	%	20 -24	%
2000 - 2001	2050	11.6	1350	7.7	2600	14.8
2001–2002	1800	9.8	1300	7.0	2650	14.5

The SAAP data from the 1999-2000 year shows that 3,000 young people aged 12-18 were accommodated in a range of SAAP services across Queensland during that year.

Anecdotal evidence in Queensland would suggest that the numbers of young people under the age of 17 entering into the SAAP service system is increasing. Further that these young people require more support periods than other target groups.

The data must also make contextual notes ie there has been little or no increase in the numbers of beds in Queensland for young people, the increasing costs associated with running a service and no net funding increase.

Indigenous young people are heavily over-represented and there are ongoing concerns about the lack of child protection responses.

Reconnect data

Initial data about the Reconnect program indicates the large number of young people being assisted by this program and the indicative success of the program in maintaining young people in the family home. It does highlight the issue of young people leaving the family home on at least one occasion or permanently. Between December 1999 and June 2001 approximately:

- 6,000 young people were assisted by Reconnect services across Australia;

- 75% were still at home at the time of their first contact but approximately 33% had left home on at least one occasion;

- 85% were still at home following support but 25% were homeless; and

- 85% were aged between 14 and 18. (Chamberlain & Mackenzie:2001:34)

Youth Support Coordinator data

In Queensland there is a program that provides youth workers in schools. The youth workers are based in non government organisations throughout Queensland. The data from the program in year 2000 revealed that:

- 650 young people accessed 11 YSC services across Queensland;

- 63% were in grade 9,10,11;

- 31% were not living with either of their parents;

- 60% were referred by school personnel;

- homelessness (existing or potential) was identified as the reason for referral to YSC for 35%;

- 37.6% were referred to YSC because they were identified as at risk of early school leaving;

- 45.7% of young people were referred to the YSC because of family conflict;

- 21% were referred to accommodation services; and

- 37.6% were referred to counselling services (Department of Families:2001).

This data highlights family conflict as a significant cause of for seeking assistance through this program (45.7%), and the significant role schools play in identifying and referring young people experiencing difficulty (60% referred to YSC by schools). This data indicates the link between family conflict and the impact it has on a student's ability to remain at school (approximately 40% were registered as being at risk of early school leaving.

The broad issues across all program areas were:

- High rate of student homelessness

- Highest numbers of homeless young people nationally

- High representation of indigenous young people seeking assistance from SAAP particularly noticeable at younger ages

- Over 87% of those under 16 cited "family/relationship breakdown" or 'time out from family/other situation' as reasons for seeking assistance, with 46% indicating this was the main reason.

- 67% of older age group cited these as reasons, with 30% as the main reason

Over the last two decades there have been a number of National research and program evaluation reports that provide evidence of high rates of youth homelessness.

Some of the broad themes from this body of literature are:

- There needs to be a comprehensive strategy that builds the protective factors in a community, this is sometimes included in the labelling of community capacity building (if framed within a social justice perspective)

- Must address the structural and institutional factors in order to address homelessness

- Large number of young people at-risk of homelessness or who are homeless

- Strong correlation between family conflict, early school leaving and homelessness

- Lack of consistency in the use of term ie prevention, early intervention, homelessness

- The meanings of terms have changed and so the intent program directions are different depending on how a meaning was intended

- Lack of protective responses by the state

- There are gaps within the continuum of care especially prevention/early intervention end.

- Young people move in and out of friends homes or with relations before finally 'leaving home'

- Schools are excellent points of early intervention

- There is a need to develop linkages with 'first to know' agencies and early intervention services

- Limited ability to respond at the crisis and supported component of the continuum

- Limited appropriate and affordable housing options

- There needs to be greater clarity with regard to the inter- relationships of service systems both a practice and policy level eg schools and CBO's

	Reports	Reconnect	YSC	SAAP
1985 (Jan)				SAAP introduced as a National Program
1988	Chesterman, *Homes Away from Home*			Evaluation of SAAP program
1989	Burdekin report, *Our Homeless Children*			
1990				SAAP II commences
1993	*Moving Forward*			2nd Evaluation of the SAAP Program
1995 (May)	Morris report, *Report on the aspects of youth homelessness*			SAAP III commences
1995 (December)	Maas, *Finding a Place – National Youth Housing Strategy*			
1996	Crane and Braddock, *Homelessness among young people in Australia: Early Intervention and Prevention*			
1996 (May)		PM Youth Homelessness Taskforce established		
1997 (July)		Youth homelessness pilot programs start	Program established	
1988 (May)	Spall, *QLD SAAP evaluation Final report*			
1998	Chamberlain and MacKenzie, *Youth homelessness, Early intervention and prevention*			
1998	Final Report PM Youth homelessness Taskforce: *Putting Families in the Picture:*			SAAP III Evaluation
1999	Preventing Student Homelessness and Early School Leaving: Putting into Practice School and Community Collaboration, The Youth Support	Reconnect services commence	Program evaluation (April)	

	Coordinator Initiative Evaluation Report,			
1999 (Sept)		Commencement of Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce		
2000 (July)				Commencement of SAAP IV
2001 (may)	Release of the *Youth Pathways Action Plan: Footprints to the Future*			
2001 (Aug)	Consultation Paper Working towards a National Homeless Strategy			
2002	Chamberlain and MacKenzie, Youth homelessness 2001,			

XI: Current Housing Environment

Overview of section xi

This section is outlining that increasing marginalisation of young people in our society and the growing divide between the rich and the poor. Further that this marginalisation has a philosophical basis.

This section also attempts to explain the impact of neo liberal philosophy on how disadvantaged and marginalised groups are pushed out of decision making processes and the importance of advocate groups.

Lastly this section attempts to explain that healthy communities enable people to participate in social and economic life. If we don't support disadvantaged and marginalised young people through both structural and individual means this creates a high cost to the community in the areas of health (due to more chronic diseases), education (due to young people disengaging from study/training) and crime.

Poverty and homelessness are two areas of social policy needs that need to respond appropriately to peoples needs in order to create better social outcomes.

The relationship between housing stakeholders

Philosophy: Civil Society

Up until the early eighties Australia was governed in a style that bridged socialism and capitalism in it's application, the state provided services and intervened through the regulation of capital. This compromise of two value systems ensured that there were a range of service responses to citizens.

Since that time there has been a growing preference for what is being described as an economically rational approach. However this approach only recognises one service response to need, that of the market economy. The market economy only recognises producers and consumers and all that is transacted is seen as commodities.

The cost of this approach is the potential for the demise of community-based organisations and the skills and knowledge that they carry with them. With competitive tendering approaches the ability for a local community to join together for resources is limited by the very nature of the poverty in that community. The rigid nature of what the producer wants will limit innovation and within a market economy any other responses (that are not market driven) are not seen as having a value. The issue becomes: where do responses that value cooperation, compassion and social relationships sit within this market framework? The focus will clearly be on the producer not the consumer ie young people.

As government continues to engage predominately with the market it will naturally lose its impartiality in its engagement with other community stakeholders. This in effect challenges the engagement of government with its citizens.

A further concern of a market driven economy is the lack of transparency and accountability through a more closed system of 'doing business'.

In the market economy the focus is on the creation of wealth. Economic rationalism assumes that the wealth that is generated 'trickles down'. However this has not been a result with economic rationalism. The creation of wealth has not been to promote freedoms for all in the community.

Concurrently in Australia the Federal government has introduced welfare reform as the new social policy. This policy in practice redefines freedom for it articulates that if you do not 'contribute' and are not self reliant then you forfeit your freedom and depend on those who 'do'. For young people this is particularly evident through the increasing administrative breaching on the Youth Allowance.

There is a lack of focus on structural inequality and only a focus on the individual and in many cases a 'blame the victim' mentality. For young people this process of growing inequality means an increasing difficulty in accessing health, education, housing, income support and legal aid services. There needs to be a level of social infrastructure to ensure individual empowerment and self determination, and the role of government is to maintain a lead role in this.

Australia is currently signatory to a number of UN Conventions that attempt to enshrine the rights of the citizen. These include:

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Convention on the Rights of the Child

Eva Cox in her Boyers Lecture series on a truly civil society writes;

> *If we are social beings rather than economic beings, then society is threatened by the presence of Economically Rational Man in public policy. This homo non-sapien is a constructed individual (not a social being) who maximises the short-term advantage in most economic models. If he takes over, he will destroy society because social connectedness have no place in a world full of self-interested, competing individuals.*

Eva Cox discusses her keywords as being: trust, reciprocity, mutuality, cooperation, social fabric and social capital. The concept of a civil society is an approach that looks at the linkages between people in a community. The concept of trust is the key to cooperation.

The fostering of participation and civic values, monitoring of government and informing public policy through education, research and analysis is the development of social capital.

Research has shown that in communities of high trust there is also a greater ability for communities to innovatively respond to social issues. There are some concerns about the ability for people on low incomes to participate, as they often do not have the resources, opportunities or skills. This necessitates the need for a range of ways that people can participate and that developmental processes are put in place to enable people to participate according to their level of ability.

The role of the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition is to demonstrate the impact of policy agenda's on young people, their families and communities. This is done through the participation of the Coalition in policy development processes and includes researching the cost of social policies, providing and stimulating social commentary and strengthening linkages in the community to respond in local, flexible and innovate ways. The outcome that is sought is the development of robust long term sustainable housing solutions for young people.

Interest groups and their relationship to government

Policy development is often created in the context of competing stakeholders who have competing and conflicting values. This process is politically and administratively complex and not always rational, with the need to balance social and economic objectives.

Government as a result receives a range of policy advice from a range of stakeholders.

It is the role of bureaucracy to provide independent impartial advice to government on policy, with the broad policy direction being provided by government. Bureaucracy is defined as "a hierarchical organisation of officials appointed to carry out certain public objectives"[3]. It is the role of this structure to provide consultative mechanisms.

One of the critical elements of a complex society is the need for government to develop structures and mechanisms for participation in the policy environment. There is clearly a move away from the social democratic perspective that includes a participatory framework that encompasses

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[3] E. Etzioni-Halevy Bureaucracy and Democracy- a Political Dilemma 1983,p. 85

consultative structures. The neo liberal theories about public choice and political participation do not acknowledge the power imbalance in society.

Politicians struggle for power through party-channeled elections; it is in their interest to promote the party and their own electoral chances. As a result there is an inherent strain in the relationship between the politician and the bureaucracy given in respect to the nature of policy development.

In many Western countries including Australia not-for-profit organisations have collectively come together to create 'member serving' organisations. They found it increasingly difficult to be able in invest their individual resources in policy development and lobbying activities. In particular they found it difficult to argue well-researched and documented policy positions across a range of areas from economic to social to political as a collective sector. They needed to be able to mobilise themselves as a sector in order to engage across a wide range of stakeholders and in the public arena.

There is no single definition of these 'member serving' organisations and this is reflected in the diversity of terms used for them ie peak body, umbrella organization Coalition or Federation. What these organisations do have in common is that they engage in some sort of lobbying and advocacy for their member organisations and/or client group/s and serve public purposes.

There are numerous strategies that these organisations use in advocating for people and in attempting to influence the policy process. Broadly these include the:
- provision of information
- consultation with a range of stakeholders
- participation
- networking
- research

The increasing heterogeneity and complexity of modern society means that there are more specialised interests and therefore interest groups. In this environment it is imperative to try to have a voice in order to have any influence on the system of government. This does not mean that there is an increase in power by any one or more of these groups, in some instances groups may countervail each other's position.

There are numerous pressure points in the policy development process (both formal and informal) that different interest groups will attempt to influence. This is a power struggle and those with little power have few or no opportunities to be heard in the process.

Impact of economic rationalism on the relationship of the State to citizens

In Australia there is an increasing move to strengthen market policies and embrace economic rationalism as the new way forward or as some have termed it the ' Brave New World'.

In order to embrace these new philosophical changes the role of government, especially that of the public service was scaled back in order to let the market function.   As a result bureaucracies have become more managers of programs rather than driving policy agenda's - focused more on output and outcome measures, contractual arrangements including that of unit costs. Increasingly government is also examining its role as a regulator and distributor rather than a provider of services. This has created a situation where funding is viewed more on a per individual basis as opposed to provision of a service. By focussing on the individual it has sanctioned for more 'blame the victim' approach to policy development as opposed to an acknowledgment of structural inequality. In many ways this has meant a more politicised bureaucracy and one which finds it harder and harder to work in partnership with the community.

The relationship between the State and service providers is changing. The language of engagement and partnership is being replaced with the language of the market ie purchaser/provider.   In turn the mutually beneficial relationship between bureaucracy and services in policy development through the utilisation of networks and community consultative processes are being reshaped.

Role, function and effectiveness of interest groups

There is a lack of understanding that interest groups attempt to undertake functions to ensure that people's voices can be heard in this changing environment. Interest groups also undertake the less visible role of fostering community engagement and civic participation through the development of trusting relationships. The role that interest groups undertake is that they attempt to:

- ⊙ Link to centralised policy development processes
- ⊙ Link to community through members and community associations
- ⊙ Acknowledge the environmental constraints from a Federal, State and Local level

In doing so interest groups provide to communities information and mechanisms to share information, knowledge and the ability to debate, an attempt to engage them and get them engaged in decision making processes and provide a medium between government and non-government.

The development of policy and the implementation of policy is a complex area of work that requires a balanced approach. As Orchard argues:

> *the health of any modern society depends upon creative attention to the changing balance between the (se) three realms (of the market economy, civil society and the State). This can only occur through a "public sphere" of open debate. The tragedy of modern ideologies of both the left and the right is the pretence that either the State or the market ought to be elevated as the driving force within the public sphere. As a modern ideology of the right, economic rationalism overplays the abilities of economic markets, underplays the role of government particularly in the redistribution and the provision of public goods, and assumes that civil society will look after itself[4]*

Corporate management approaches recently adopted by government have also meant that there have been an increasing number of 'top down' decisions in resource allocation based on broad based data and narrow definitions of performance. Again this has meant that there is little input by the community and no contextual information on community needs supplied to government. Further the investment in information technology has created little change at the grass -roots level.

Democratic liberal processes and mechanisms are being eroded in the contract and tendering culture. Consultations and advocacy only function within a narrow interpretation of interest groups.

While the Community Services Strategy in Queensland is an attempt by the government to provide a framework for the community services sector to engage with government, the problem with the strategy is that it is an static document in a fast moving policy and economic environment. The strategy currently needs to reflect better the contract and tendering environment that community services work within. It does however provide a government position on engagement with the sector by setting down principles.

Disadvantaged groups in the community, where collective action is the only way that they can resource themselves to be heard, are finding that they are being forced out of the policy making arena. Interest groups are therefore also finding it increasing difficult to be effective in their work.
Philosophy driving housing policy

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[4] Orchard,L 1995 *Public Institutions and the Role of Intellectuals,* Paper presented to the workshop - "Contract State, Social Charter or Social Compromise: Towards a New Australian Settlement, University of Sydney, November/December 1995, page 10

Funding for housing assistance through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement has been in steady decline since the mid nineties. Peter Young[5] in his paper outlines the impact of the declining CSHA dollar.

> *In Queensland our per capita share of CSHA funding peaked at $91 per head of population in 1993/94, and is expected to drop to just under $60 per head of population in 2002/2003 (funding adjusted to 1998/99 dollars). Modelling work to understand the possible impacts of this decline in funding suggests that Queensland's public housing portfolio could decline from 50,000 units of housing now, to about 36,000 units of housing in 20 years time.*

Housing options for young people

The current housing system comprises of:

- Home ownership
- Private rental housing - in which caravans and boarding houses are included
- Public housing
- Transitional housing ie Community Rent Scheme
- Long term community housing
- Crisis and supported accommodation

Young people have limited access to housing options with the main housing access point being the private rental market.

Private rental market issues

The private rental market is often the only choice that young people have in seeking a roof over their heads. Independent young people on low incomes are most likely to live in private rental market housing and receive rent assistance from Centrelink (Fopp 1997, Shaw 1994). For many young people living in the private rental market is at enormous personal and financial costs, this is particularly so for disadvantaged young people (those young people who cannot live at home due to financial hardship, lack of parental support, general family conflict or breakdown, physical or sexual abuse or domestic violence). The private rental market is expensive; the National Youth Housing Strategy (1995) found that 90% of young people were spending more than 25% of their income on housing, with 44% spending more than 50% of their income on housing costs. As a result many young people are forced to share or find accommodation that is inappropriate and insecure.

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[5] Peter Young, October 2001, Housing Assistance: a Lifetime perspective – the policy implications of this whole-of-government cost-benefit framework

Fopp (1997) identified young people in Brisbane (December 1995) spending a large proportion of their income (especially if they are on income support benefits) on rent.

This situation has not altered; in March 2001 the median rent for a 2 bedroom flat in the Brisbane area was $180.00 p/w.

March 1999   - $160.00pw / $320.00pf
March 2000   - $165.00pw / $330.00pf
March 2001   - $180.00pw / $360.00pf

A single young person in receipt of the Youth Allowance receiving a total per fortnight income of $378.10p/f ($290.10p/f + rent assistance of approximately $88.00p/f) would be left with only $18.10 per fortnight to cover all other living costs.

Should this young person be sharing with another single young person the after housing income would be $168.80p/f ($290.10p/f + rent assistance of approximately $58.70p/f), this would need to cover items such as food, personal hygiene, electricity, transport and other living costs.

If this young person was working, for example, as an apprentice bricklayer (first year), they would have an after housing income of $89.60pf (wages of $449.60pf, not entitled to rent assistance). Alternatively, if they were to share with another single person, their after housing income would be $269.60pf.

A similar situation is reflected across the state. For example, a young person in Kingaroy, sharing a 2 bedroom flat with another single young person, would pay rent of $100.00pf (half the fortnightly rent of $200.00). This would leave them with an after housing income of $206.60pf ($290.10pf Youth Allowance + $16.50 rent assistance approximately).

A young person in the same living arrangement in Townsville would have an after housing income of $203.80pf, after paying a fortnightly rent of $180.00 (half of the fortnightly rent of $290.00) ($290.10pf Youth Allowance + $58.70 rent assistance approximately).

A very basic grocery bill per fortnight (calculated according to *Food Guidelines for Teenagers* from the Australian Nutrition Foundation, and priced at a Brisbane inner city supermarket, August 2001) came to just over $80.00 per fortnight, but did not include tobacco, condoms or feminine hygiene products. Research (HFAB 2000) indicates that the "'cost of living', including the cost of basic foods, is higher in remote and rural areas" with the cost of meat / meat alternatives, and dairy products showing the greatest variance).

Across the All Groups Index (Index of Retail Prices in Regional Centre, 1999) including housing rents and local authority charges, food, groceries, alcohol and tobacco, housing, and transport prices, 65.12% of regional centres were more expensive than Brisbane.

83.72% of these centres were more expensive than Brisbane was in terms of food, groceries and tobacco.

58.14% of the regional centres had more expensive transport prices than Brisbane, and 13.95% had higher housing costs.

Using the regional examples of Kingaroy and Townsville to compare the 'cost of living' with Brisbane shows that Kingaroy prices fall slightly below those of Brisbane, and Townsville prices rise slightly above.

Index of Retail Prices in Regional Centres, Queensland, August 1999

Centre	Groups	All Housing Groups Less Housing Rents & Local Authority Charges	Food Groceries, Alcohol & Tobacco	Housing	Transport
Brisbane	100	100	100	100	100
Kingaroy	96	99	99	72	104
Townsville	101	102	99	103	103

(Source: Index of Retail Prices in Regional Centres, 1999)

One of the ways that young people attempt to overcome the affordability issues is to form group/share households and/or to choice housing stock that is of a low quality standard. In areas where there is little or no housing stock this means limited housing choices. The National Youth Housing Strategy found that 63% of young people age 16-19 and 38% of young people live in shared housing arrangements.

Major barriers to accessing the private rental market are the prohibitively high establishment costs including bonds, electricity, gas, telephone connection and furniture. Without support access to the private rental market is particularly hard.

Another barrier is to the private rental market for young people is that landlords and agents are reticent in renting properties to disadvantaged young people. Fopp (1997) states that 'Landlords may hold a negative view of young people, even if landlords do not hold such a view, they may minimise risk by renting properties to older tenants who have higher incomes and are more likely to have a good tenancy record. Often young people have difficulty establishing such a record with references because they have not previously rented. In this case, their very age disadvantages them'.

Critical issues such as housing affordability, discrimination and /or a lack of references (because they have not previously rented), lack of housing experience and the need for personal support coalesce to disadvantage young people's search for appropriate and affordable housing. While there are a range of social housing options, young people have limited access to these.

The introduction of tenancy databases has further increased young people's disadvantage in this tenure. In effect tenancy databases are boycott databases. In Queensland the State government has enacted legislation that provides a level of protection against unjust listing on tenancy databases.

Compounding all this is the shrinkage of stock at the lower end of the private rental market. While has been an increase by 34% in the private rental market overall there has been no increase in the low cost dwellings (Yates 1999). Yates further writes "This has occurred at a time when the number of low income households in the private rental market grew by 70% to almost a quarter of a million households."

The growth in low-income households has been more pronounced in non-metropolitan areas (90%) than in metropolitan areas (60%). In Queensland research by QCOSS and the Social Action Office (1999) supports the rising levels of poverty and the demographic and geographic trends associated with it.

"Recent data for Queensland using Rental Bond Board data (Seelig 2000), suggests no improvement post 1996 in the stock or rent increase situation. Thus with low cost rental stock continuing to disappear, there will be sustained pressures on the low end of the market. This raises the spectra of a cat chasing it's tail. As rents increase rent assistance increases but, with no policies to increase low cost stock, low cost rents continue to soar and rent assistance outlays increase as more households become eligible for assistance. In the long term this is neither satisfactory for rent recipients who find rent assistance increasingly eroded by rent increases or for the Commonwealth Treasury" quoted from a paper by Terry Burke.

Further he goes on to elaborate that "It is however the states that confront the real policy and program dilemma. If the private rental sector is both part cause of, and part solution to, homelessness what is to be done about a worsening access and affordability situation. The coming years will require State governments to think more innovatively about what levers they have to make the lower end of the private market work more effectively and/or what are the alternatives. If they do not homelessness will, all other factors constant, worsen considerably."

The private rental sector is characterised by many investors who own limited numbers of rental stock.

Despite all these issues outlined above the private rental market remains the most common form of tenure for young people due to the lack of access to other tenures. QYHC advocates to government and the private rental industry to improve young people's experience of this tenure.

What is demonstrated above is the high level of rent assistance (increasing public expenditure) will be required to continue to rely only on private rental housing for young people and that an increasing number of homeless that will be a by-product of relying on the private rental market (increasing public expenditure and social costs). Further that affordability, discrimination and security of tenure issues are not being addressed by the private rental market.

Separation of Housing and Support

The concept of support and who requires support is an area where very little work has been done. Everybody has a support need however the critical element is whether that supported is provided by family and friends or in combination with external support agencies.

The concept of support is commonly discussed when external support agencies are being utilised.

The definition of support articulated by the QYHC is:

> *Services that assist an individual/group to maintain their social and emotional well being.*

The underlying principles must be based in a social justice framework, promoting rights and seeking to ensure access, equity and participation.

Types of support needs – ongoing or periodic – young people may have one or more of these support needs at any given point in time.

Ongoing support – can be providing in a number of modes

- 24 hours, by necessity

- 24 hours a day, negotiated

- 24 hours, upon request only

Periodic support – provision of support on a irregular basis as a one-off means of assistance.

Types of support could include (but not restricted to): living skills, budgeting, counselling, and transportation.

Support must be portable ie attached to the person not the housing except in crisis and supported accommodation. The nature of the SAAP program is that it is intensive support provided for young people to assist them to move to independent living. Once young people are ready for independent living the SAAP workers assist in establishing supportive arrangements for young people in a community setting.

Support Needs

	Ongoing – necessity	Ongoing – negotiated	Ongoing – request	Periodic
High	⬍	⬍	⬍	⬍
Low				

Many service users may have multiple support needs. This in turn requires a level of coordination between support agencies in ensuring that there is no duplication or conflict in the support being delivered. Client-based approaches to service delivery are a key element to ensuring that effective and efficient support is being provided.

In the diagram below QYHC is starting to explore how young people are central to the development of support 'packaging'. Acknowledging that it is crucial to have an advocate who is the key support person that can assist the young person in facilitating how services engage with them. The young person must choose the key advocate, however the critical component of this model is support agencies in working together.
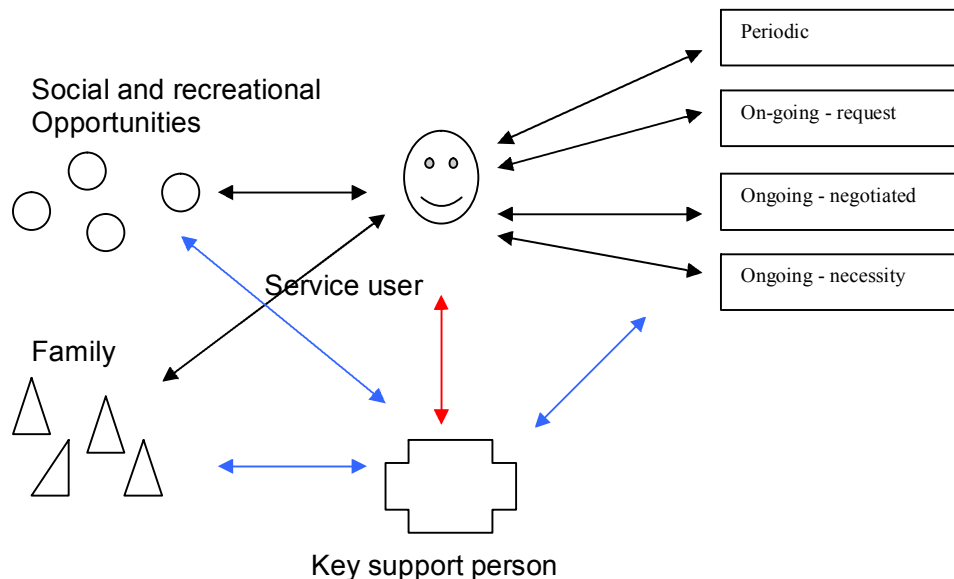
Housing and non housing related outcomes

The recent position paper by Phibbs and Young[5] outlines the lack of empirical data directly linking the lack of housing with non housing outcomes. Their research attempted to explore the relationship between housing and health, crime, employment and education. The results demonstrate that housing is an important factor in the well being of citizens.

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition clearly identifies housing as an important element is assisting young people to take advantage of the life opportunities that may be offered to them. An independent young person requires housing/shelter in order to be able to go to school/training/work - without a stable place to live they are unable to get into a routine that is required to take up these opportunities. The lack of a place to call home also impacts on a person's sense of place and identity and their ability to relate to the community around them and to participate in social and recreational opportunities. Studies in Queensland [6] support the Chamberlain and Mackenzie[7] work that young people will disengage from school or study due to the loss of safe, affordable and appropriate housing.

The Phibbs and Young paper does highlight the importance of strong and vital communities to assist people to participate in community life.

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[5] Phibss Peter and Young Peter, July 2002, AHURI positioning paper:Housing Assistance and non shelter outcomes
[6] Uhr, R, 2003, Couchsurfing in the Burbs
[7] Chamberlain and Mackenzie, Youth Homelessness 2001

Many homeless young people need accommodation to address the emotional and practical issues of not being able to live in a family home. Young people who are living 'rough' may become involved in the criminal justice system, having more chronic health needs, do not participate in education/training/work and have substance abuse issues. The costs to the community in not responding are high eg increased health costs in particular around issues such as Hepatitis C infection.

The report "Counting the cost of Homelessness: A systematic Review of Cost effectiveness and Cost Benefit Studies of Homelessness" by Berry, Chamberlain, Dalton, Horn and Berman supports the individual and community benefits of intervening appropriately and where possible as early as possible in meeting the needs of homeless people. Further the report findings outline the cost savings to government across support programs through adequately responding to homelessness.

Federal Policy	Neo-liberal policy agenda ▪ Deregulation ▪ Small government ▪ Market will provide ▪ Welfare reform agenda	Federal Policy Impact		▪ Young people penalized in the income support system ▪ Less protection in the workplace due to the clawing back of Awards ▪ Reinforcing dominant stereotypes of male and female roles and family structures		
	Home Ownership	**Public housing**	**Private rental**	**Community Housing**	**Transitional**	**Crisis and supported**
Federal Housing **Policy**	▪ First home owners grants	▪ Decreasing funding through the CSHA	▪ Increasing funding through Rent assistance	▪ No real change identified		▪ National Homelessness Strategy
State Housing Policy	▪ Home purchase assistance - deposit assistance - special assistance grants - subsidies - mortgage relief - lease management	▪ Provision of public housing - Considering of a move away from tenure of choice - Move to more increased targeting	▪ Increasing use of the private rental market both as a provider and investor in housing ▪ Provision of - bond loans - Rental Grants and subsidies - Home Assist - TAAS	▪ Introduction of the concept of the BHC ▪ Regulation of the Community Housing sector	▪ Provision of subsidised housing through the private rental market ▪ Move to utilise public houses in this program if appropriate	▪ Provision of crisis and supported accommodation ▪ Currently the DoF and DoH are looking at benchmarks and viability ▪ State Homelessness strategy
Implication	Focusing on this area could result in a lack of diversity in the provision of housing. In addition Federal Grants are predominately for new homes and services family structures not single people or other family structures or housing options.	In a housing market that provides limited opportunities esp. for people on low incomes, public housing has a key role. The move away from a tenure of choice may mean limited opportunities and so do not provide equity of opportunity to engage in other areas of community life	▪ While there may be increasing funds this has not meant an increase in access nor an increase in supply at the lower end ▪ Discrimination esp. for women with children ▪ Tenant database still a major issue	▪ In an increasingly regulated market will smaller community based housing organisation's survive and what are implications for those that were established on a philosophical basis. ▪ BHC does not cater for young people on low incomes.	▪ Concern in this area is that it may be seen as the main service that accommodates young people who are unable to access other tenures	▪ Lack of diversity of models due to funding constraints ▪ Inadequate no of beds and lack of choice ▪ Focus again on viability and need to re-focus on quality outcomes